



# **2004 DEM Permitting Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Report**



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## **Acknowledgements**

The Department of Environmental Management conducted a survey of some of its permitting programs in August and September 2004. Almost 2300 surveys were sent out to businesses, municipalities and citizens who applied for permits in the July 2003 to June 2004 time period. Three hundred twenty eight people took the time to fill out these surveys and provided DEM with valuable information about these permitting programs. DEM would like to express its appreciation to everyone who provided the department with both positive comments and constructive criticism.

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## I. Executive Summary

This summer, DEM completed its third customer satisfaction survey of its major permitting programs. Almost 2300 individuals, consultants, municipalities and individuals who applied for permits in FY 2004 were surveyed. It is DEM's goal to provide a very good to excellent level of service to customers. This translates to a positive response rate to survey questions of greater than 91%. Appendix F is a compilation of the DEM survey results of the responses. The results of this survey showed that DEM was providing an overall good level of customer service with respect to its conduct in pre-application meetings, permit application review and overall effectiveness of the permit program. Table 1 below is a compilation of the survey results.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>2004 Permitting Program Survey Results</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Pre-application Meetings</b>	<b>Permit Application Review and Determinations</b>	<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>
Air	Very Good Service	Good Service	Excellent Service
ISDS	Good Service	Average Service	Average Service
OTCA	Average Service	Not Applicable *	Good Service
Pesticides	Not Applicable	Excellent Service	Excellent Service
Waste	Excellent Service	Very Good Service	Very Good Service
Water	Excellent Service	Good Service	Very Good Service
Wetlands	Good Service	Average Service	Good Service
<b>Average of all Programs</b>	<b>Good Service</b>	<b>Good Service</b>	<b>Good Service</b>

\*It should be noted that OTCA does not perform application review and determination functions and the survey questionnaire should reflect this. The program's rating in this category was replaced with a Not Applicable rating.

As can be seen above, customer satisfaction varied by program and DEM provided an excellent to an average level of service in the various programs. Although not all the program surveys represented a statistically valid sample, the survey results in 2004 show a general improvement trend. At this time, the survey indicated satisfaction with DEM's level of service in the following areas:

- The DEM permitting staff treated permittees in a courteous manner. (98%)
- The assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting / discussion. (94%)
- The availability of DEM staff in responding to pre-application questions. (93%)
- Requests for supplemental information by DEM were clear. (93%)
- The clarity of the final permit decision. (93%)
- The role of the permitting process in protecting the environment? (92%)

It should be noted that the DEM average for both the Pre-application Meetings and the Overall Satisfaction categories achieved a 90% positive response rate, which is only one percentage point away from a very good service rating.

The survey did note a few areas where service could be improved. The survey raised issues with the following:

- The relevance of the timeliness for requests for supplemental information by DEM. (79%)
- DEM's timeliness in the notification that their application was complete. (80%)
- The relevance of the requests for supplemental information by DEM. (80%)
- Satisfaction with the way the permitting process was managed? (85%)

The ISDS and Wetlands programs have seen significant improvements in their customer service evaluations over the last few years. Both programs are now achieving customer ratings in the good to average range. There were a number of questions relating to timeliness of actions where the response rate continues to be evaluated below an 80% positive response rate. The two programs were recommended to evaluate their programs and to report to the director on ways to improve customer service.

## II. Background

The Department of Environmental Management issues over ten thousand environmental permits during the course of a year. The Ombudsman conducted a survey in July and August of 2004 to assess the customer satisfaction of these permitting programs. This survey was based on a protocol developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for evaluating permitting programs.

The surveys were sent to over 2300 individuals, businesses or governmental entities that applied for permits in the last state fiscal year. Not all permit types were surveyed. Appendix A lists the permitting programs that were surveyed. The survey was designed to have a return rate that would represent a statistical sample. Appendix B outlines how the survey sample size was determined.

Appendix C is a generic survey instrument used. The survey was designed to collect information in a manner that would allow statistical analysis of the data concerning DEM permits. The survey, however, was not successful in collecting a statistically valid sample in some cases because of the low number of permits processed and/or a low response rate. 328 surveys were returned. This is an overall response rate of 15%. Table 2 is a breakdown of the responses received by program.

<b>Table 2</b>				
<b>Permitting Program Survey Response Rate</b>				
<b>Programs Surveyed</b>	<b>Total Surveys Sent</b>	<b>Total Surveys Returned</b>	<b>Return Rate%</b>	<b>Statistical Sample Collected</b>
Air	57	19	33	No
ISDS	913	136	15	Yes
Pesticides	164	32	20	No
OTCA	100	24	24	No
Waste	456	71	16	Yes
Water	266	16	6	No
Wetlands	306	30	10	No
Totals	2262	328	15	

The survey requested responses from customers in three main areas of the permitting process, i.e., Pre-application Meetings, Permit Application Review and Determinations, and Overall Satisfaction. The survey requested the applicants to rate DEM's effort as "exceeding expectations", "meeting expectations" or "not meeting expectations". Some individuals had no contact with DEM and used consultants to apply for permits. Because of this, some responses fell into the "does not apply" category.

In order to simplify the analysis of the data the "exceeded expectations" and "met expectations" responses were combined or collapsed into one category and called the positive response. The "did not meet expectations" response was considered a negative response. Appendix D is a compilation of the collapsed responses. An open-ended question was included in the survey that allowed the survey

respondent to discuss other issues. The comments of the open-ended questions will be discussed at the end of each permitting program analysis.

There were insufficient sub-program responses to the Water, Wetlands, Pesticides and Air Resource application to evaluate each sub-program, therefore the responses were tallied and called a program response. By aggregating the responses together, we were able to provide observations on customer satisfaction by these programs. Due to the higher response rate in the ISDS and Waste Programs, statistical samples were collected to allow for some analysis of the subprograms.

Another question was added this year to identify who filled out the form. The survey was examined to determine if the response rates were different for consultants, governmental entities and non-consultants who were considered members of the public. The results of this analysis are presented in each of the permitting programs in Section III.

In order to analyze the results of this survey it would have been useful to compare the responses in Rhode Island with a national database that measures customer satisfaction. This was an EPA survey instrument, but information was not available that would set a benchmark for analyzing the survey results. In addition, information on customer satisfaction of governmental agency permitting processes was not available. This report will attempt to determine if there are any improvements in the program since the survey was initiated in 2002. A comparison of the results from the 2002, 2003 and 2004 surveys will be discussed in Section IV (Trends).

The programs were rated using the evaluation criteria in Table 3. This evaluation criterion is the same that were used in the previous surveys. Customer satisfaction is an important issue at DEM. As a result, this evaluation system is rigorous and the standard for meeting customer satisfaction is set high. It is the goal of DEM to provide customer service at the very good to excellent level for all programs. This survey will allow DEM to conduct an evaluation of its permitting programs and to continue the process of continuous improvement in its service to the public.

<b>Table 3</b>	
<b>Proposed Program Evaluation Criteria</b>	
<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
96-100%	Excellent Service
91-95%	Very Good Service
86-90%	Good Service
80-85%	Average Service
Less than 80%	Service needs improvement

### **III. General Observations on DEM's Permitting Programs**

Table 1 is a compilation of the results of all surveys aggregated by category. The results varied in the three categories from providing excellent to average service. In general DEM provided a good level of service in its permitting programs. This is an increase of one category over last year's survey. Overall three of the programs are meeting the DEM goal of at least very good service in the Pre-application category, two of seven in the Permit Application Review and Determinations category and four of seven in the Overall Satisfaction category. Specific comments will now be discussed in the individual program permitting programs. Appendix E is a comparison of the three categorical summaries of all

programs surveyed. At this time, the survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with DEM's service in the following areas:

- The DEM permitting staff treated permittees in a courteous manner. (98%)
- The assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting / discussion. (94%)
- The availability of DEM staff in responding to pre-application questions. (93%)
- Requests for supplemental information by DEM were clear. (93%)
- The clarity of the final permit decision. (93%)
- The role of the permitting process in protecting the environment. (92%)

The DEM average for both the Pre-application Meetings and the Overall Satisfaction categories achieved a 90% positive response rate, which is only one percentage point away from the goal of a very good service rating.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>2004 Permitting Program Survey Results</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Pre-application Meetings</b>	<b>Permit Application Review and Determinations</b>	<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>
Air	Very Good Service	Good Service	Excellent Service
ISDS	Good Service	Average Service	Average Service
OTCA	Average Service	Not Applicable *	Good Service
Pesticides	N/A	Excellent Service	Excellent Service
Waste	Excellent Service	Very Good Service	Very Good Service
Water	Excellent Service	Good Service	Very Good Service
Wetlands	Good Service	Average Service	Good Service
<b>Average of all Programs</b>	<b>Good Service</b>	<b>Good Service</b>	<b>Good Service</b>

\*It should be noted that OTCA does not perform application review and determination functions and the survey questionnaire should reflect this. The program's rating in this category was replaced with a Not Applicable rating.

The survey did note a few areas where service could be improved and included the following:

- The relevance of the timeliness for requests for supplemental information. (79%)
- DEM's timeliness in the notification that their application was complete. (80%)
- The relevance of the requests for supplemental information. (80%)
- Satisfaction with the way the permitting process was managed? (85%)

Appendix F is a graphical presentation of the survey data, by question by program. The following section will discuss the survey findings by program.

#### **A. Air Program Survey Results**

The air survey requested responses from three program areas, i.e., the operating, pre-construction and air toxics operating permit programs. There were 19 responses from the 100 surveys sent out. Appendix F-1 is a compilation of the responses to the survey by each question. Six responses were from operating permit sources, 8 from the pre-construction permitting program and 5 from the air toxics operating program. Due to the small sample size, the responses are not considered as statistically valid, but we will be able to make some observations of the program nevertheless. The permitting

process was judged in the excellent to good range in the three categories. Two consultants, fourteen non-consultants and two governmental entities filled out the surveys.

Table 4 is a tabulation of the results for the three categories covered by the survey, i.e. pre-application meetings, permit application review and determinations and over-all satisfaction of the permitting process. The survey indicated the air-permitting program was providing a good to excellent level of service to permit applicants.

<b>Table 4 Air Program Customer Survey Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	94%	Very Good Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	86%	Good Service
Overall Satisfaction	96%	Excellent Service
Average Satisfaction	93%	Very Good Service

The most positive responses of the permitting program are noted in Table 5 below. According to the survey responders, DEM program staff itself provided excellent service. In addition the survey indicated support for the pre-application process.

<b>Table 5 Air Permitting Program Strengths</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question / Concerning</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>
4b	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff treated you in a courteous manner?	100%
4d	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff responded to your needs for guidance, information, or technical support under the permit process?	100%
2a-d	All questions concerning the pre-application process	94%
4a,4c	Satisfaction with the management of the permitting process and communications with DEM staff.	93%
4e	Overall, how satisfied are you with the role of the permitting process in protecting the environment?	93%

There was only one question where the responses fell into the needs improvement category. Twenty-four percent of the responders indicated they were not satisfied with the program's timeliness in notifying when the application was complete.

There were a number of general comments made about the specific permitting programs. The following comments were directed towards the pre-construction permit program:

- The application process takes too long.

The following comments were directed towards the air toxics operating permit program:

- Staff does not return phone calls promptly.
- The process takes too long.
- Staff is very helpful.

The following comment was directed towards the operating permit program:

- The program needs better guidance; that would help the company and state save money.
- The staff is knowledgeable and prompt with returning phone calls.

## **B. ISDS Program**

The ISDS program has the responsibility of permitting wastewater treatment systems for individuals and commercial facilities. This program has the most contact with the public and regulated community than any other DEM program. Permitting activities are divided into three main stages: site-suitability, design review, and construction inspection. Site-suitability is a preliminary stage that assesses the suitability of a parcel of property for on-site wastewater disposal. Design review entails a review to determine a design's compliance with state standards, rules and regulations including maintenance of setbacks to drinking water wells, water supplies, and sensitive water bodies. Proper design and installation is essential to protect public health and avert the potential adverse impacts of ISDS on water resources. Inspections are conducted during installation and are normally required for each system.

Annually, the program undertakes approximately 2,300 suitability assessments, 5,000 permit reviews, and 11,600 inspections. Additionally, the program has developed a process for approving innovative septic system technology. As a result of the 1997 revisions to the ISDS legislation, a licensing program (including training and examination) for private-sector professional designers and installers has been implemented.

Appendix F-2 is the compilation of the results of the 136 surveys. The information collected from the survey would constitute a statistically valid sample. The surveys represented responses from the following categories of permits: Residential New Building Construction (56), Residential System Suitability Determinations (SSDs) (23), Alterations (19), Redesign (11), Soil Evaluation / Water Table Verifications (10), Soil Evaluations (8), Commercial (5), Residential Repairs, Variances (2) and others (4). The Residential New Building Construction survey response also constitutes a statistical sample size and will be discussed in that context. There appears to be sufficient responses to the survey from the Residential Repairs and Alterations permits and SSDs that will enable some observations about the service provided in these application processes. Appendices F-2 a, b and c are the survey responses by each question for each one of these programs.

### **ISDS Program Survey Results**

153 surveys were returned and were filled out by 15 consultants, 94 non-consultants and 4 representatives of governmental units. The non-consultant response was assumed to be the homeowners applying for the permits. In the case of consultants, there were only eight different entities that filled out the survey. A number of the consultants indicated they were commenting on a number of permit processes. Since the number of consultants who filled out the survey was small, the evaluation of the ISDS program would generally reflect the public's view of the program.

Table 6 is a tabulation of the results for the three categories covered by the responses from the whole ISDS survey, i.e., pre-application meetings, permit application review and determinations and over-all satisfaction of the permitting process. The ISDS permitting program is providing an overall average level of customer service. It should be noted that the pre-application process positive response rate is an improvement over last year's survey and the service level was increased from the average to good level.

<b>Table 6 ISDS Permitting Program Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	87%	Good Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	80%	Average Service
Overall Satisfaction	83%	Average Service
Average Satisfaction	83%	Average Service

The ISDS program scored high on four questions. Responses indicated that people, in general, were satisfied with their interactions with DEM staff.

<b>Table 7 ISDS Permitting Program Strengths</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question / Concerning</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>
4b	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff treated you in a courteous manner?	97%
2a	How satisfied are you with the availability of DEM staff in responding to your pre-application questions?	92 %
3di	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? i. Clarity of Request?	91%
2b	How satisfied are you with the assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting /discussion?	90%

Table 8 is a compilation of the questions that had the highest negative response rates. The survey indicated a concern with the timeliness of the decision-making and communication from the permitting program; the management of the program and the relevance and clarity of supplemental information requests from the program.

<b>Table 8 ISDS Permitting Program Improvement Opportunities</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Negative Response Rate</b>
3e	*How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?	33%
3diii	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of Request?	28%
3c	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?	25%
3dii.	*How satisfied are you with the relevance of DEM's request for supplemental information?	25%
4a	*Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?	24%
4c	*Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM?	23%

\* Indicates the question was a concern in the 2003 Permitting Survey.

The open-ended comments were often contradictory. The comments indicated the staff, in some instances, were professional and provided good services and others thought the opposite. There were many comments (14) that indicated they did not have any contact with DEM since this was done by the designer / builder. (The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of times a comment was made.) The general comments included the following:

- Pleased with the process. (13)
- Staff was always courteous and always returned phone calls. (2)
- Notices and website is helpful. (2)
- The permit process took too long, process and procedures were difficult, and there was a lack of program guidance. (12)
- Received valuable information after the application was denied. Was never told the application could not be approved and have wasted both time and money. (2)
- The head of the program was courteous, but the staff still needs work. (2)
- Application was sent back twice on minor issues that could have been handled over the phone.
- DEM should use laymen terms when explaining the denial of an application.

## **Bi. ISDS Residential New Construction**

Appendix F-2a is a compilation of the responses that were concerned with the Residential New Construction permitting process. 56 surveys were completed in this category and the responses would be considered statistically valid. 4 consultants, 41 non-consultants and 1 non-governmental unit filled out the surveys. Table 9 is a summary of the results by category. According to the survey, the program was not providing adequate service with the permit review process. The overall program results indicate the permitting program needs service improvement. There was only one area where the program provided service above the good level. The respondents thought the DEM permitting staff treated the applicants in a courteous manner.

<b>Table 9 ISDS Residential New Construction Permitting Program Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	83	Average Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	76	Service needs improvement
Overall Satisfaction	80	Average Service
Average Program Satisfaction	79	Service needs improvement

There were nine areas where service levels needed improvement. For the most part, the issues here are similar to those expressed in the comments of the whole ISDS program. According to the program about 20% of new building construction applications involve variances. Negative comments concerning timeliness would be expected from applicants who are requesting variances since this program does take the longest to get to a decision point. Table 10 details these areas.

Table 10 ISDS Residential New Construction Permitting Program Improvement Opportunities		
Question #	Question	Negative Response Rate
3diii	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of request?	32%
3dii	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Timeliness of request?	32%
3e	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?	32%
4a	Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?	29%
3c	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?	26%
2d	How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)?	24%
4c	Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM?	24%
4d	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff responded to your needs for guidance, information, or technical support under the permit process?	23%
3f	How satisfied are you with the clarity of the final permit decision?	22%

There were a number of general comments made about the process. Four surveys indicated the builder handled all communications with DEM. (The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of times a comment was made.) The general comments included the following:

- Pleased with the process. (7)
- Staff was always courteous and always returned back phone calls. (2)
- Notices and website is helpful. (2)
- The permit process took too long, process and procedures were difficult; there was a lack of program guidance. (9)
- Received valuable information after the application was denied. Was never told the application could not be approved and have wasted both time and money. (2)
- Application was sent back twice on minor issues that could have been handled over the phone. (2)

#### **Bii ISDS Residential Site Suitability Determination (SSD) Customer Survey Results**

Appendix F-2b is a compilation of the responses that were concerned with the ISDS Residential Site Suitability Determination (SSD) permitting process. 23 surveys were completed in this category and the responses would not be considered statistically valid. 1 consultant, 19 non-consultants and 1 non-governmental unit filled out the surveys. Table 11 is a summary of the results by category. According to the survey, the program was providing an excellent level of service with respect to Pre-application Meetings, an average level for the Permit Application Review and Determinations process and good for the overall satisfaction and the program satisfaction.

<b>Table 11 ISDS Residential Site Suitability Determination (SSD) Program Survey Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	97	Excellent Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	82	Average Service
Overall Satisfaction	90	Good Service
Average Program Satisfaction	88	Good Service

Table 12 is a summary of the strengths of the ISDS SSD program:

<b>Table 12 ISDS SSD Program Strengths</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question / Concerning</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>
2a	How satisfied are you with the availability of DEM staff in responding to your pre-application questions?	100%
2b	How satisfied are you with the assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting /discussion?	100%
2c	How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the information provided to you through the pre-application meeting/discussion?	100%
4b	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff treated you in a courteous manner?	100%
4e	Overall, how satisfied are you with the role of the permitting process in protecting the environment?	94%

Table 13 details the four areas where positive response rates fell below an 80% positive response rate indicating a need for service improvement.

<b>Table 13 ISDS SSD Program Improvement Opportunities</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question / Concerning</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>
3diii	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of request?	60%
3dii	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Timeliness of request?	66%
3e	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?	72%
3c	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?	77%

There were seven general comments in this area. Three of the comments were supportive of program staff and the process itself. Four comments were not supportive and indicated the process takes too long. In addition one survey indicated they were never told the application could not be approved and have wasted both time and money in pursuing the matter.

### **Biii ISDS Residential Repair and Alteration Customer Survey Results**

Appendix F2-c is a compilation of the responses that were concerned with the ISDS Residential Repair and Alteration permitting process. 19 surveys were completed in this category and the responses would not be considered statistically valid. 4 consultants, 8 non-consultants and 1 non-governmental unit filled out the surveys. Upon closer evaluation of this program, there were a high percentage of surveys that indicated the process was handled by the developer / builder. There were also a high percentage of people who either skipped questions or indicated they had no comments. Due to the relatively low number of surveys filed and the paucity of information supplied by the surveys; further analysis was not done on this application type.

### **C. Pesticide Program**

The Pesticides Section is part of the Agriculture Division. This Division reports to the Bureau of Natural Resources. All other programs identified in the survey are part of the Bureau of Environmental Protection (The DEM organizational chart is listed in Appendix G). This unit is responsible for enforcing state laws and regulations developed to protect people from poisonings and to prevent environmental degradation that might result from improper use of pesticides on farms, in yards, and inside homes. Through this program, commercial pesticide applicators are trained, tested, and licensed to achieve a level of competence in the pesticide application industry. Without diligent enforcement of these regulations, there would be an increased incidence of pesticide poisonings and environmental damage.

Appendix F-3 is the compilation of the results of the thirty-two surveys. The information collected from the survey would not constitute a statistically valid sample. The survey size is, however, large enough to make some observations about the program. The surveys represented responses from the following categories of permits: Private Applicators (7), Licensed Commercial Applicators (14), Certified Commercial Applicators (7), Licensed Dealers (2) and Others (2). 6 consultants, 15 non-consultants and 3 representatives of governmental units returned the survey.

Table 14 is a summary of the responses of the two categories covered by the survey, i.e., permit application review and determinations and over-all satisfaction of the permitting process. Unlike other programs, the pesticides program does not conduct pre-application meetings and the survey was modified to reflect this fact. The pesticides permitting program appears to be providing an overall excellent level of service to permit applicants.

<b>Table 14</b>		
<b>Pesticides Permitting Program Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	N/A	N/A
Permit Application Review and Determinations	100%	Excellent Service
Overall Satisfaction	100%	Excellent Service
Average Satisfaction	100%	Excellent Service

There were a number of general comments made about the program and include the following:

- No need to change a thing, the system is perfect..
- Staff is always polite and answers questions, especially Robin Mooney and Elizabeth Lopes-Duguay. Increase training opportunities to earn credits towards licensing.
- Continue to offer re-certification credits at the RINLA Winter Meeting. It is informative and convenient.
- A better program is needed to install Integrated Pest Management. Additional help is needed to advise and help farms and growers on spray material. It would be cost effective for all.
- There should be more information presented concerning pest control work during pest control training. There was no information presented on becoming a pest control technician.

#### **D. Office of Technical and Customer Assistance (OTCA)**

The OTCA provides assistance to the general public, state and local governments, and the business community concerning compliance with rules, regulations, environmental standards, and the permitting process. One aspect of this service is to coordinate pre-application assistance to companies and to individuals seeking permits. Prospective applicants for environmental permits will be able to have a single point of contact who will provide information on permits required, including permits for large facilities where more than one type of environmental permit is required. Another service is to coordinate the application review process for projects that require more than one environmental permit such as the permitting of large facilities that involve air emissions as well as construction that involves more than five acres (which requires a stormwater permit). Part of this coordination function is to track projects that the Economic Development Corporation's Board has determined to be of Critical Economic Concern. It should be noted that the OTCA does not perform application review for the purpose of issuing permits. The survey questionnaire needs to be modified to reflect this fact. The survey responses were initially analyzed and the Permit Review and Determinations section was rated as needing improvement. This rating should not be attributed to the OTCA since they do not perform this function. The survey summary was modified to indicate this part of the evaluation should be scored a not applicable rating. The survey will be changed next year to reflect this fact.

The OTCA also serves as an information repository for the Department's regulations and policies that allows the public to easily access these regulations and policies. Other functions provided by OTCA includes maintaining DEM's website, providing user-friendly descriptions of the regulations and technical support in the development of DEM's compliance efforts that allows businesses to self-certify compliance with the environmental regulations.

Appendix F-4 is a compilation of the twenty-four surveys that were returned. The information collected from the survey would not constitute a statistically valid sample to properly evaluate the OTCA. Of the 100 surveys mailed over 25% were returned with improper addresses. This high return rate of mail did not allow for a statistical sample size to be collected. The surveys represented responses from the following categories of OTCA customers: Wetlands Projects (12), ISDS (4), Site Remediation Projects (4), Dredging Projects (1), and Other (1). 15 consultants, 4 non-consultants and 4 representatives of a governmental unit returned the survey.

As mentioned above, the survey response does not represent a statistical sample of the customers served by the OTCA. Nevertheless some observations can be concerning the survey responses. Table

15 is a summary of the survey for the OTCA program. On average, the program is providing an average level of customer service. The survey results indicate that there may be room for improvement.

<b>Table 15 OTCA Program Summary Results</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	81%	Average
Permit Application Review and Determinations	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Overall Satisfaction	88%	Good Service
Average Satisfaction	84%	Average

There were four questions that had a positive response rate of 100%. The survey indicated the program requests for supplemental information were clear and people were satisfied with the clarity of the final decision. The survey indicated people were satisfied that the OTCA / permitting staff treated them in a courteous manner. The survey also indicated that the respondents were satisfied with the role of the permitting process in protecting the environment.

Table 16 is a summary of the improvement opportunities. Although the sample size of the survey is not sufficient to be a statistical sample, the comments should be reviewed for possible improvement opportunities. A number of the questions received rating that were in the needs improvement category because they referred to the permitting process, i.e., questions 3c, 3e, and 4a. It is not clear if the respondents were not satisfied with the permitting program or the activities of OTCA. As mentioned above, this section will be clarified in next year's survey, and the results will not be marked as an area that needs improvement. Questions 3dii and 3diii are requests that are generally requested by the programs. Concerns were raised on the ability of OTCA to provide information to reduce the permitting burden and the assistance provided in the pre-application meeting, which are more OTCA functions.

<b>Table 16 OTCA Program Improvement Opportunities</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Negative Response Rate</b>
2d	How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)?	30%
2b	How satisfied are you with the assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting /discussion?	23%

There were five general comments provided by survey respondents and include the following:

- Overall experience with DEM was very good. Received excellent service.
- A few DEM people should take the role of an applicant and see how things go. I believe there was a movie about a physician who had to spend time in a hospital. He left a changed MD.
- Ron Gagnon is an exceptionally professional and courteous person to work with. He alone changed my negative opinion of DEM based on general public comments. (Alter Wetlands)
- An outside Engineering Firm should perform ISDS functions. (ISDS)
- There should be a time element for DEM to act on / respond to a permit or else the permit is approved.

## **E. Waste Management Program**

The Office of Waste Management is responsible for regulating sources that generate, dispose and treat hazardous, solid and medical waste products. The program is also responsible for implementing programs that clean up sites that are contaminated with hazardous waste. Appendix F-5 is a compilation of the seventy-one surveys that were returned. The information collected from the survey would constitute a statistically valid sample and would represent an Office of Waste Management permit program evaluation. The surveys represented responses from the following categories of permits: Waste Transporters (50), Tank Registrations (11), Solid Waste Management Facilities (5), Corrective Actions (2) and Others (3). 7 consultants, 57 non-consultants and 1 governmental representative filled out the surveys.

Table 17 is a summary of the survey for the three categories covered, i.e. pre-application meetings, permit application review and determinations and over-all satisfaction of the permitting process. The waste-permitting program, as a whole, is providing an overall very good level of service, which is the second highest level of customer service, to permit applicants. In general, all questions had a positive response rate greater than 90% with the exception of question 3dii. This question deals with the timeliness of DEM's request for supplemental information and scored an 86% positive response.

<b>Table 17</b>		
<b>Waste Program Survey Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	97%	Excellent Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	93%	Very Good Service
Overall Satisfaction	95%	Very Good Service
Average Satisfaction	95%	Very Good Service

A number of comments were provided in the open-ended question and included the following. (The name in the parenthesis indicates the permitting program that applies to the comment.):

- DEM provides good assistance with projects. (Corrective Actions, Solid Waste Management Facilities)
- Keep the language simple. Permit process is sometimes in double talk. You are not flexible for considering exemptions even for the lowest amount of products. (Tank registrations)
- Tank fee are due in October for registrations that do not expire for the following June. The paperwork we need isn't received until October or November. This can be a problem since some companies continually asks for the new certificates before they expire. They can refuse to deliver gas if the paperwork is not received. (Tank registrations)

## **Ei. Transporter Permitting Program**

The transporter program had 50 responses to the survey. This response would represent a statistical sampling of the permitting program. Appendix F-5a is a compilation of the responses by question for the transporter program. The survey results indicate this permit program is providing an excellent level of customer service. Table 18 is a summary of the survey results.

Table 18 Transporter Permitting Program Survey Summary		
Survey Categories	Positive Response Rate	Service Provided
Pre-application Meetings	98%	Excellent Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	95%	Very Good Service
Overall Satisfaction	98%	Excellent Service
Average Satisfaction	96%	Excellent Service

In general, all questions had a positive response rate greater than 90% with the exception of question 3dii. This question deals with the timeliness of DEM's request for supplemental information and scored an 86% positive response.

The following comments were from surveys submitted by transporters. (The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of times a comment was made):

- The transporter permit renewal process is cumbersome. (2) Criminal background checks are a waste of time.
- A pleasure to work with DEM. This is one of the easiest governmental agencies to work with. (2)
- The transporter program should consider a multi-year permit. Renewal information does not significantly change on a yearly basis and the administrative work needed to complete the permit is cumbersome.
- DEM is doing a fine job and appreciate the process the way it is.
- I have added several vehicles to our permit at various intervals and am very satisfied with the quick and courteous service, especially by Jan Angel.
- DEM personnel do not call back from voice messages.
- Should be able to fill out applications electronically.

## F. Water Resources

There are many programs within the Office of Water Resources. The mission of this office is to ensure that rivers, lakes, and coastal waters will support healthy communities of fish, plants, and other aquatic life, and will support uses such as fishing, swimming, and drinking water quality. It also is responsible for protecting groundwater. Appendix F-6 is a compilation of the sixteen surveys returned. Water had the lowest return rate of the all the program, with only 6% of the surveys being completed. The information collected from the survey would not constitute a statistically valid sample. The survey covered five programs and the RIPDES program had the highest number of returned survey with 7. Due to the low number of returns, there are not a lot of observations that can be made concerning the programs. The surveys represented responses from the following categories of permits: Water Quality Certifications (4), Underground Injection Controls (1), RIPDES (7) Approval & Maintenance Plan for Wastewater Treatment Facilities (2) and Wastewater Operators Licenses (2). Four consultants, seven non-consultants and one representative of a governmental unit filled out the survey.

Table 19 is a tabulation of the results for the three categories covered by the survey, i.e. pre-application meetings, permit application review and determinations and overall satisfaction of the permitting process. The water resources permitting program appears to be providing an overall very good level of service to permit applicants who responded to the survey.

<b>Table 19 Water Resources Permitting Survey Summary</b>		
<b>Survey Categories</b>	<b>Positive Response Rate</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Pre-application Meetings	97%	Excellent Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	86%	Good Service
Overall Satisfaction	92%	Very Good Service
Average Satisfaction	91%	Very Good Service

It is interesting to note that the pre-application process and the overall process satisfaction all had positive responses greater than 90%. The permit Application Review and Determination process had positive response rates ranging from 82 to 91%.

A number of comments were provided in the open-ended question and included the following. (The name in the parenthesis indicates the permitting program that applies to the comment.):

- In general the management level of personnel are courteous, informal and helpful. Concerns were raised about staff. In addition, the requirements of the rules or the results of reviews are not accurately or clearly expressed, resulting in undue delay and frustration. (Water Quality Certifications)
- Electronic filing of plans could be problematic. Hard copies are still required for builders, installers and municipalities. Electronic tracking has been very useful. (UIC)

## **G. Wetlands Program**

The Wetlands program is responsible for regulating alterations of Rhode Island's freshwater wetlands. The application process verifies delineated wetland edges and determines the presence of wetlands. The program reviews proposed projects in and adjacent to freshwater wetlands for any applicant who is the owner of the property. The program reviews approximately 700 applications in 2004.

Appendix F-7 is a compilation by question of the thirty surveys that were returned. The information collected from the survey would not constitute a statistically valid sample. The observations from the survey cannot be attributed to the program as a whole. The surveys represented responses from the following categories of permits: Request for Preliminary Determinations (10), Application to Alter Wetlands (9), Request to Verify Delineated Edge / Presence of Wetlands (5), Renewal Application (2), Permit Transfer Application (3) and other (1). Two consultants, twenty-five non-consultants and one representative of a governmental unit filled out the survey.

Table 20 is a summary of the results for the three categories covered by the survey, i.e. pre-application meetings, permit application review and determinations and overall satisfaction of the permitting process. The wetlands permitting program is providing an overall good level of service to permit applicants who responded to the survey. This represents an increase of customer satisfaction by one category.

Table 20 Wetlands Permitting Program Summary Results		
Survey Categories	Positive Response Rate	Service Provided
Pre-application Meetings	88%	Good Service
Permit Application Review and Determinations	82%	Average Service
Overall Satisfaction	89%	Good Service
Average Satisfaction	86%	Good Service

There were six questions where the Wetlands Program received greater than a 90% positive response rate and are listed in table 21.

Table 21 Wetlands Permitting Program Strengths		
Question #	Question / Concerning	Positive Response Rate
3f	How satisfied are you with the clarity of the final permit decision?	100%
4b	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff treated you in a courteous manner?	97%
4d	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff responded to your needs for guidance, information, or technical support under the permit process?	96%
2a	How satisfied are you with the availability of DEM staff in responding to your pre-application questions?	96%
2b	How satisfied are you with the assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting /discussion?	93%
4c	Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM?	92%

The staff should be commended in providing excellent service in writing clear permits, treating people in a courteous manner and responding to information requests and being available in the pre-application meeting process. It should also be noted question 4c concerning quality and timeliness of staff communication was in the needs improvement category last year.

The surveys did suggest there could be room for improvements in the administration of the program. Table 22 is a compilation of these concerns. Although there were not enough responses to allow for a statistical evaluation of the program, all of these concerns fell into the needs improvement category and the program should look into these issues.

<b>Table 22 Wetlands Permitting Program Improvement Opportunities</b>		
<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Negative Response Rate</b>
3c	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?	29%
2c	How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the information provided to you through the pre-application meeting/discussion?	26%
3e	*How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?	26%
3diii	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of Request?	25%
4a	*Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?	21%

\*Indicated this was noted as a concern in a previous survey.

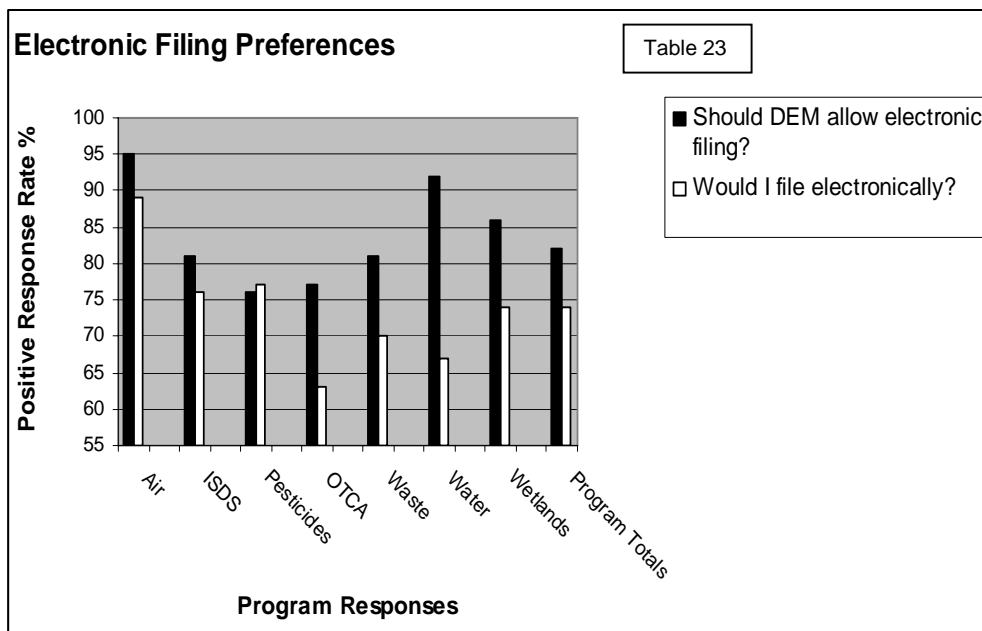
A number of comments were provided in the open-ended question. The majority of the comments indicate that staff provided good customer service. Some of the comments indicate concerns with the timeliness of the process. A summary of the comments is below: (The name in the parenthesis indicates the permitting program that applies to the comment.)

- When issuing a permit, the supervisor should consider the individuals situation and work with that persons as to not cause financial hardship with an abundance of irrelevant requests. (Renewal Application)
- Very satisfied with the wetlands application process, particularly Paula DiRaimo who kept me well informed with the status of the permit. (Verify Edge, Preliminary Determinations)
- Staff was responsive to my questions. (Verify Edge, Preliminary Determinations)
- Timeliness between reviews was longer than expected. Phone calls were returned and meetings were helpful. (Verify Edge, Preliminary Determinations, Alter Wetlands Application)
- ISDS should take lessons from the wetlands division. (Renewal Application)
- The process is frustrating, but the people we worked with are very supportive and cooperative. (Alter Wetlands)
- Is it DEM practice to have a flood plain study done for a lot? This will cost about \$5,000 and would like to know if such a request is needed. (Alter Wetlands permit)

## **H. Electronic Filing Preferences**

There were two questions on the survey that requested responses concerning the submission of applications electronically. The first question asked if DEM should allow applications to be filed electronically. The second question asked if the applicant would file applications electronically if they could. Table 22 is a compilation of the results of these survey questions.

82% of the survey responders were supportive of allowing applications to be filed electronically. 74% of the respondents indicated they would file applications in this format if allowed. Over 80% of the responders from the Air, ISDS, Water, Waste Management and Wetlands programs supported this approach. Over 75% of the surveys returned from OTCA and Pesticides were supportive of the idea.



The second question asked people if they would file electronically had lower positive response rates. In many instances the public relied on consultants to file applications. The Air responders, who are mostly consultants, were most supportive with almost 90% indicating their desire to file electronically. Over 70% of the responses from the ISDS, Pesticides, Waste Management, and the Wetlands Programs supported this initiative and indicated they would use this format.

## V. Trends

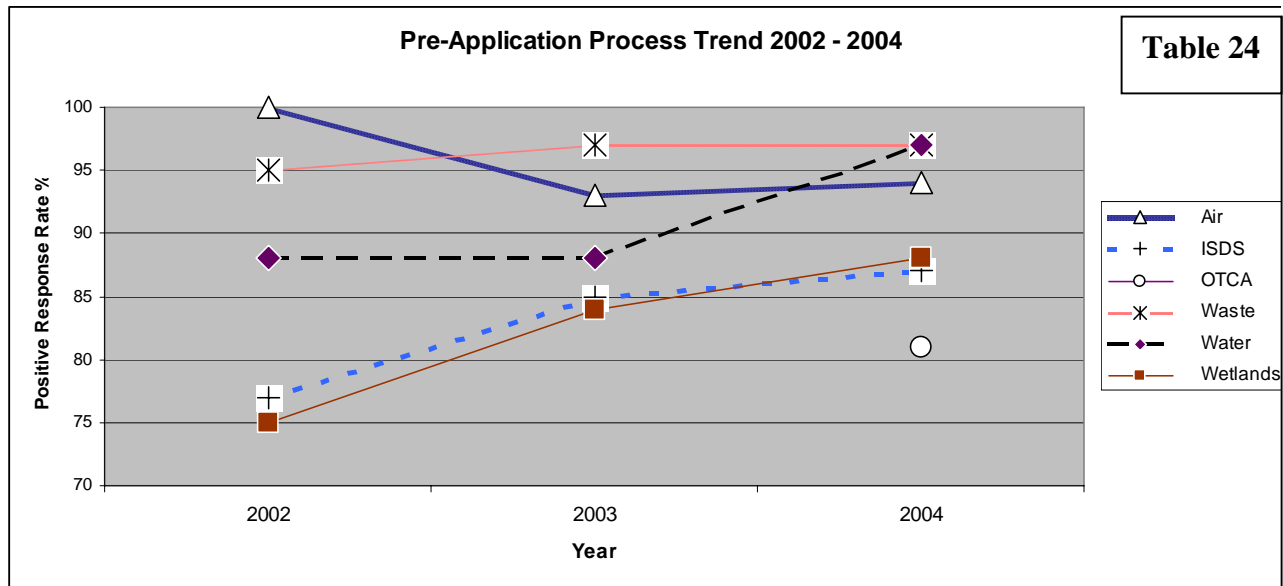
This is the third year that DEM has conducted a permit program customer satisfaction survey. This section of the report will discuss any trends concerning the surveys. We need to be cautious when we interpret these results. The survey design had an 80% confidence level and a sampling error of  $\pm 10\%$ . In addition, not all programs had a response rates that would be considered to be a statistical sample. The size of the survey was increased this year and even though only the Waste and the ISDS programs had sufficient responses to be considered a statistical response, the Wetlands and the Pesticides Programs had returns approaching what needed to be considered a statistical sample size. In all three years, the Water permit survey response was very small and there will be no attempt to draw any trend conclusions from the data. In addition, the Office of Technical and Customer Assistance was added to the survey this year and there is no trend information available for this office.

In this section the trends for 2002 to 2004 will be evaluated for the three main sections of survey, i.e., the pre-application process, the permit application and review determinations and the overall satisfaction of the permit process. In 2003, two questions were added to determine permittees preference for filing applications electronically.

### A. The Pre- application Process

Table 24 graphs the trends for the pre-application process. This section is requesting feedback on the assistance that DEM staff provided during the early stages of the permit process. Questions were asked about staff availability and the information and assistance provided by DEM personnel.

According to the chart, the ISDS and Wetlands programs have seen significant increases in positive responses to the pre-application process. The Waste program continues to provide excellent service in this area. In 2002, the Air Programs survey was limited to just the pre-construction permits. In the 2003 survey the air toxics and operating permits were added and this has expanded the number of survey respondents. It appears their service level is holding in the very good range. It would appear that these two programs are meeting DEM's goal of providing at least a very good level of service, i.e., greater than 91% positive response rate.

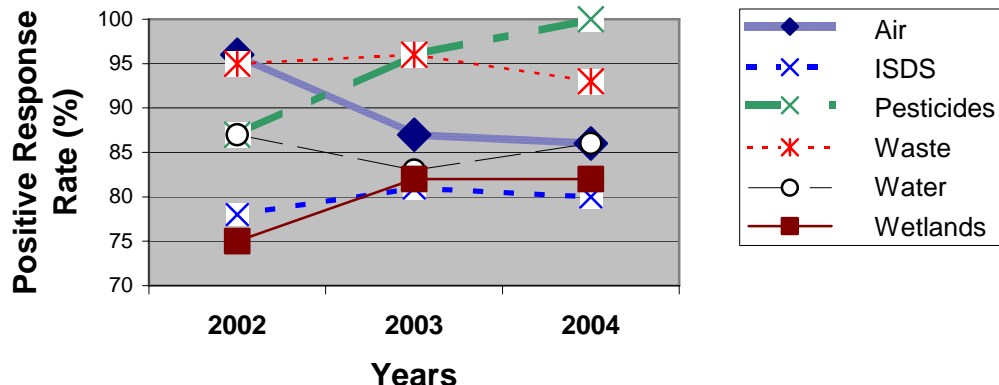


## B. The Permit Application Review and Determination Process

In this section the survey is collecting information on the systems used by DEM to review applications. The first step of the procedure, in many instances, is to determine if the application is complete enough to process. During this stage, the programs often request additional information from the applicants. Questions were asked to receive feedback on the forms, program guidance, the clarity, timeliness and relevance of supplemental information requests. This section also requested information on the timeliness and clarity of the final permit decision.

Table 25 below shows the trend for the survey for the last three years. It is important to note that timeliness of issuance of permits has been a concern with DEM over the years. The survey shows that there have been improvements in the Pesticides, ISDS and Wetlands Programs. All permitting programs surveyed are now above the minimum DEM goal of an 80% positive response rate. There does appear to be a downward trend in the Air Program. The sample size was increased in 2003, but this only represents the return of about 20-25 surveys. There was also a slight drop in the response rate for the Waste Program from the excellent to the very good customer service level. Nevertheless, the Waste and the Pesticides Programs have appeared to meet the DEM goal of providing at least a very good level of service in this category.

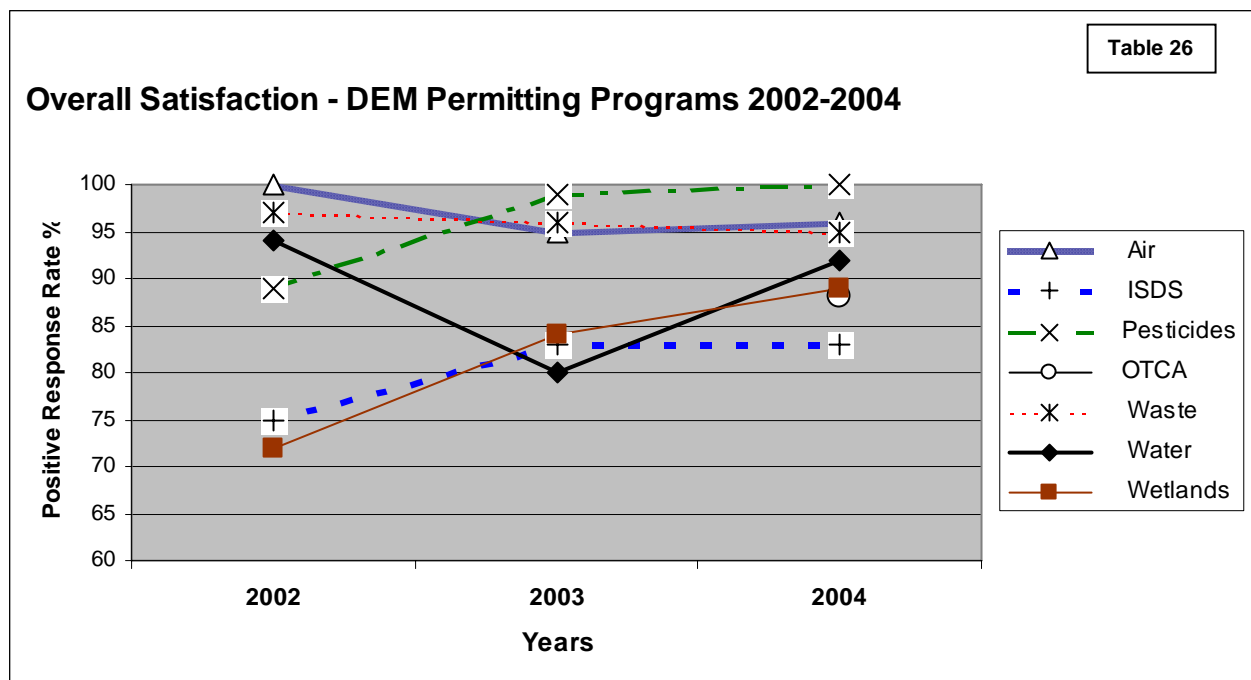
Table 25

**Application Review Process Trend 2002 - 2004****C. Overall Satisfaction of the Permitting Process**

The third category of questions relate to customers overall satisfaction with the permitting process. This section provides feedback on the management of the process, staff treatment of permittees, communications with staff and the satisfaction of with how the process protects the environment. Table 26 shows the trend in this area of customer satisfaction. In 2002, both the wetlands and ISDS programs were providing service that indicated that improvements were needed in the programs. The Wetlands and ISDS programs have increased service levels to the good and average levels respectively. The Water Program has had very low response rates, so it is difficult to determine if there is a trend in the overall satisfaction level. The Pesticides and the Air Resources Programs continue to operate at an excellent customer service level. There was a small dip in the customer service level of the Waste Program, but it is still achieving the second highest service level. It should also be noted that the first year survey results did not represent a statistical sample.

It would appear that the Waste, Air and Pesticides Programs are providing at least a very good service level for and are meeting the DEM goals in this category.

One important question (4e) in this category is whether the applicants feel the permitting process is useful in protecting the environment. This is the primary objective of the environmental permitting programs. It is significant to note that 92 % of the people surveyed agreed that the permitting program was useful in protecting the environment.



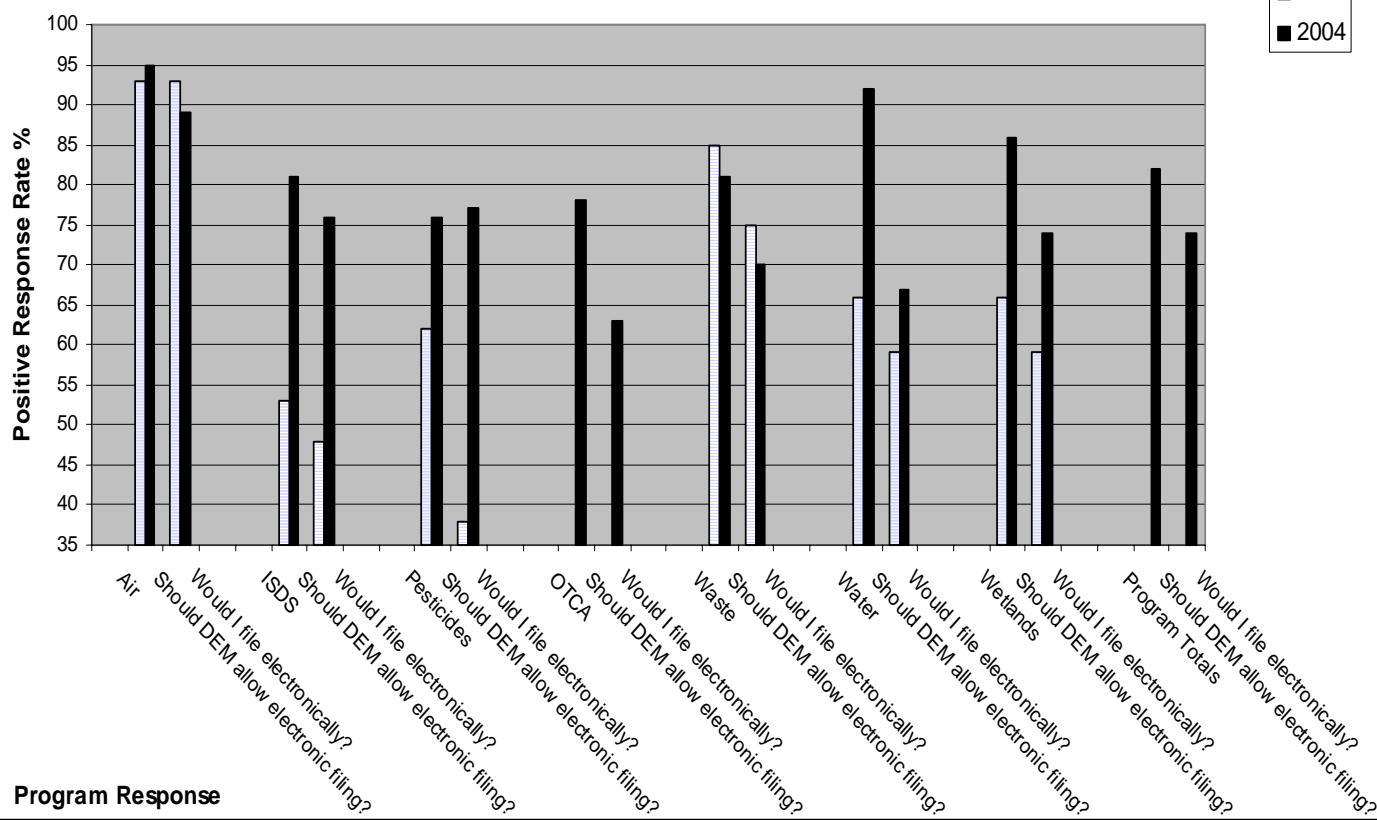
#### D. Electronic Filing of Applications

The survey introduced two questions in 2003 that requested information from survey respondents concerning the filing of applications electronically. In addition survey asked if the permittees would use this format if they were allowed. Table 27 summarizes the results of these questions. With few exceptions, people responded more positively that they want DEM to allow applications to be filed electronically and they also indicated their willingness to use this format. The survey response from Wetlands, ISDS and Pesticides applications had the highest positive response increase on their desire for DEM to make this option available. Responses also indicated that people who filed ISDS and Pesticide applications would use this format if it were made available.

Table 27

## Electronic Filing Preference

□ 2003  
■ 2004



## V. Recommendations

A lot of useful information was collected during the 2004 DEM permitting Customer Satisfaction Survey. The survey, for the most part indicated that DEM was providing customer service that was receiving positive responses from the public. Programs that were providing service in the Very Good to Excellent category should continue to maintain this level of service. Every programs goal should be to achieve this level of service. This section will focus on the parts of the DEM permitting program where the survey indicated DEM was not achieving its minimum goal of an 80% positive response rate or there were general comments that should be considered by the programs as possible ways to improve service.

### A. Air Resources Permitting Program

The Air Resources permitting survey results were not a statistically valid sample size. However, there were a few areas where the program should review its procedures to look for areas of improvements and include the following:

A1. 76% of the survey indicated they were not satisfied with the programs timeliness in the notification that the application was complete. (Question 3c)

- The program should review their current procedures and determine possible ways to be timelier in their completeness determinations.

A2. There were three general comments captured by the survey, i.e., (1) Staff does not return phone calls promptly; (2) The program needs better guidance; that would help the company and state save money and (3) The process takes too long.

- The program should respond to the three general comments by and determine if any changes should be made to the procedures in the program.

The program responded to these suggestions and is incorporated in Table 28.

## **B. ISDS Permitting Program**

The ISDS permitting survey results were a statistically valid sample size. This was true for the compilation of all results from the sub-programs along with the survey results for the Residential New Construction permitting program. The survey indicated a number of areas where the service needs improvement and include the following:

There were seven questions that had positive response rates below the DEM minimum goal of 80% for the ISDS program as a whole. In addition there was one question in the residential new building permit program that did not receive a positive response rate over 80%.

B1. Five of the questions received positive response rates lower than 80% in the 2004 survey. The five questions include the following:

- 2d. How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)?
- 3diii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of Request?
- 3e. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?
- 4a. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?
- 4c. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM?

B2. The next two questions relate to the timeliness of program actions.

- 3c. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?
- 3dii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Timeliness of request?

The program should review its current processes and develop a plan to raise the positive response rate to greater than 80%. This plan should be submitted to the Director by May 30, 2005 and suggested improvements incorporated in the next work plan.

## **B3. Residential New Construction Permitting Program**

The Residential New Construction Permitting Program had a response rate that constituted a statistically valid sample. The survey indicated that this permitting program was not achieving the DEM goal of 80% in two categories, i.e., Pre-application Meetings and Overall Satisfaction. Program management should review the processes where applications are reviewed in this category and determine ways to improve customer satisfaction. The program should prepare a report of their

findings to the director by May 30, 2005 and incorporate any changes needed to improve customer satisfaction in the 2006 work plan.

B4. Table 28 contains a number of general comments (BG 9-13) concerning the ISDS permitting programs. The program should review these comments and prepare responses to them by April 15, 2005 and determine if there are any improvements that can be made to the program to respond to these issues.

The program responded to these issues and their response is included in Table 28.

### **C. Office of Technical and Customer Service**

The OTCA survey results did not constitute a statistically valid sample size. A number of the survey questions may actually apply to the program offices that OTCA interfaces with. A number of responses appear to apply to service that OTCA provides.

C1. OTCA should review its procedures to look for areas of improvements in the service provided and should prepare a response to the following questions by April 15, 2005:

- 2d. How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)?
- 3dii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Timeliness of DEM's request?
- 3diii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of request?
- 4a. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?

The OTCA responded to these issues and their response is included in Table 28.

### **D. Pesticides Permitting Program**

The Pesticides Permitting Program did not have any questions that fell below the 80% positive response rate. There were a number of general comments that were collected in the survey.

D1. The Pesticides Permitting Program should review the general comments (DG1-5) in Table 28 and provide responses to these comments by April 15, 2005.

The Pesticides Permitting Program responded to these issues and their response is included in Table 28.

### **E. Waste Management Permitting Programs**

The Waste Management Program did not have any questions that fell below the 80% positive response rate. There were a number of general comments that were collected in the survey.

E1. The Waste Program should review the general comments (E1-6) in Table 28 and provide responses to these comments by April 15, 2005.

The Waste Management Permitting program responded to these issues and their response is included in Table 28.

## **F. Water Resources Permitting Programs**

The Water Resources Permitting Programs did not have any questions that fell below the 80% positive response rate. There was only one general comment that was collected in the survey.

F1. The Office of Water Resources should review the general comments (F1-6) in Table 28 and provide a response to this comment by April 15, 2005.

The Water Resources Permitting Program responded to these issues and their response is included in Table 28.

## **G. Wetlands Permitting Program**

The Wetlands permitting survey results were not a statistically valid sample size. There were a number of questions where the level of service fell below the DEM minimum goal of an 80% positive response rate.

G1. There were three survey questions that fell below the DEM Positive Response goal of 80%. These areas include the following:

- 3c. The timeliness in notifying permittees that their application was complete.
- 2c. The usefulness of the information provided to the permittees through the pre-application meeting/discussion.
- 3diii. The relevance of requests for supplemental information by DEM.

The program should review its current processes and develop a plan to raise the positive response rate to greater than 80%. This plan should be submitted to the Director by May 30, 2005 and suggested improvements incorporated in the next work plan.

G2. Two questions received positive response rates less than the DEM goal of 80% positive response rating in the last two surveys. The program should report back to the Director by April 15, 2005 on ways to improve on these areas:

- 3e. DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of permits.
- 4a. The way the permitting process was managed.

The program should review its current processes and develop a plan to raise the positive response rate to greater than 80%. This plan should be submitted to the Director by May 30, 2005 and suggested improvements incorporated in the next work plan.

G3. There were five general comments that were collected in the survey. The program should prepare responses to comments GG1-5, where appropriate, by April 15, 2005.

The Wetlands Program responded to these issues and their response is included in Table 28.

## **H. Electronic Filing Preferences**

The survey indicates a general trend that people are interested in filing environmental permits electronically. DEM should evaluate its capabilities to request support from the Information

Management Unit to migrate a number of the applications to an electronic format, especially the Air Permitting programs.

H1 The Air Program received very high response rates in the survey the last two years and permittees indicated their desire for DEM to move forward with this initiative. DEM should consider if this program or any other program(s) could be programmed for this capability in the next fiscal year.

## VI. Survey Comment Review

The survey indicated that there are opportunities to improve customer service in some of the permitting programs. The survey was analyzed by question and also reviewed to discuss specific comments made by individuals. This part of the report will provide DEM program responses / recommendations, when provided, to questions where the response rate fell below 80%. It will also address comments made by individual respondents. There will be more emphasis placed on questions where responses to questions received positive response rates lower than 80%. Nevertheless, a response will be provided to all significant comments either in this report or in a subsequent report provided by the Wetlands and ISDS programs, to the Director, that is due May 30, 2005. Table 28 is a compilation of these recommendations.

Appendix H is the survey comment tracking form that will be used to track the progress in implementing program changes due to the 2004 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

<b>Table 28</b>			
<b>Issues Raised by the 2005 Customer Assistance Survey</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Concern / Comment</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Air Program Survey Concerns</b>			
A1	Pre-construction Permit and Operating Permit Program	3c. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete? (76% Positive Response)	The Pre-construction permit program generally doesn't make completeness determinations. The Operating Permits Program made completeness determinations on the original applications in the late 1990's and was diligent in doing so. No action is recommended as a result of these comments.
<b>A. Air Program General Comments</b>			<b>Response</b>
AG2	Air Toxics Operating Permit Program	Staff does not return phone calls promptly.	Staff will be reminded of the importance of returning calls promptly.
AG3	Operating Permit Program	The program needs better guidance; that would help the company and state save money.	It's not possible to respond without knowing what program area the commenter is referring to.
AG4	Pre-construction Permit Program	The process takes too long.	The Air Permit Streamlining Task Force considered the time it takes for processing pre-construction permit applications among other issues. The Task Force's report can be found at <a href="http://www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/ombuds/pstream/air/pdfs/airpsrep.pdf">http://www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/ombuds/pstream/air/pdfs/airpsrep.pdf</a> .
AG4	Air Toxics Operating Permit Program	The process takes too long.	The Office of Air Resources prioritizes emission sources for requiring the submittal of permit applications based on the amount and toxicity of the sources' emissions and other factors. Reviews take varying lengths of time depending on complexity. Competing priorities and limited staff resources have resulted in delayed permit issuance. The program has recently been restructured and issuance times should be improved.

<b>B. ISDS Program Survey Concerns</b>			<b>Response</b>
B1	ISDS Program, New Building Construction (76%)	2d. How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)? (77% Positive Response)	ISDS Program staff has taken steps to work proactively with designers to ensure designs meet standards. Review comments provided are clear and concise and usually result in improvements needed to permit the project upon resubmittal and review. Design manuals are produced for all new technologies approved under the innovative/alternative technology program.
B2	ISDS Program, New Building Construction (74%), SSD (76%)	3c. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete? (75 % Positive Response)	ISDS Program staff undertakes reviews for administrative completeness upon receipt and the applicant is notified immediately of any administrative deficiency. The responses provided to this question likely reflect concerns that technical deficiencies are not uncovered timely. The technical review generally takes less than an average of 30 days for new construction applications.
B3	ISDS Program, New Building Construction (68%), SSD 66%)	3dii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Timeliness of request? (74 % Positive Response)	Same response as above.
B4	ISDS Program, SSD (60%), New Building Construction (68%)	3diii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of Request? (72 % Positive Response)	We suspect that those who were not satisfied with the relevance of our request for supplemental information may not have understood the regulations sufficiently to understand the need. Licensed designers who, as a group, have a good understanding of the requests generally prepare ISDS applications. In the case of SSDs, which are completed by homeowners, we urge applicants to call DEM if there are questions.
B5	ISDS Program, SSD (72%), New Building Construction (68%)	3e. Satisfaction with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of permit? (67 % Positive Response)	Negative responses here are likely due to variance applications. New rule changes and program guidance is being developed to clarify the procedures used in this application type.
B6	ISDS Program, New Building Construction (71%)	4a. *Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed? (76 % Positive Response)	The reasons for the negative responses here are not identified. Managers of the program continually make improvements or changes where resources allow, and admit limitations in the program's ability to respond to all needs.
B7	ISDS Program, New Building Construction (76%)	4c. *Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM? (77 % Positive Response)	Negative responses here are likely due to variance applications. New rule changes and program guidance is being developed to clarify the procedures used in this application type.
B8	New Building Construction (77%)	4d. Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff responded to your needs for guidance, information, or technical support under the permit process?	ISDS Program staff has taken steps to work proactively with designers to ensure designs meet standards. Review comments provided are clear and concise and usually result in improvements needed to permit the project upon resubmittal and review. Design manuals are produced for all new technologies approved under the innovative/alternative technology program.

ISDS General Comments			Response
BG9	ISDS Program (New Building Construction, SSD)	The permit process took too long, process and procedures were difficult; there was a lack of program guidance. (12)	Most of these responses are likely due to variance applications. New rule changes and program guidance is being developed to clarify the procedures used in this application type.
BG10	ISDS (New Building Construction, SSD)	Received valuable information after the application was denied. Was never told the application could not be approved and have wasted both time and money. (2)	Program guidance is being prepared that will provide a tool to allow applicants to score their variance requests, which should improve expectations.
BG11	ISDS Program	The head of the program was courteous, but the staff still needs work. (2)	We rarely receive this type of complaint. Many employees have attended training to improve customer service skills, and managers stress courtesy routinely.
BG12	ISDS (New Building Construction)	Application was sent back twice on minor issues that could have been handled over the phone.	Many minor deficiencies are handled by phone; however, if a plan change is needed, the licensed professional is usually obligated to make the correction
BG13	ISDS Program	DEM should use laymen terms when explaining the denial of an application.	The denial letter has been reviewed and is deemed acceptably concise and contains legally required provisions.
C. OTCA Program Survey Concerns			Response
C1	OTCA Program	2d. How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)? (70% Positive Response)	Goal should be in the 90% range. Not all pre-application meetings will present opportunities for minimizing the overall permitting burden. Based on Pre-application meetings, applicant wants to know what DEM will approve. It must be noted that OTCA is not the permitting authority. Staff is therefore reluctant to provide solutions because the permit applicant may perceive the project will be approved if OTCA's recommendations are followed. OTCA does have expertise in pollution prevention issues and will attempt to use these techniques where appropriate.
C2	OTCA Program	3c. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete? (58% Positive Response)	OTCA is a facilitating organization and does not approve applications or require the submission of additional information to process an application. The notification process is a permitting Office function and not an OTCA function.
C3	OTCA Program	3dii If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Timeliness of DEM's request? (63% Positive Response)	OTCA tries to respond in less than 24 hours. As mentioned above, requests for supplemental information are normally a permitting program function.
C4	OTCA Program	3diii If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of request? (63% Positive Response)	As mentioned above, requests for supplemental information are normally a permitting program function.
C5	OTCA Program	3e. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit? (71% Positive Response)	As mentioned above, OTCA does not issue permits. This comment could reflect the process of the permitting program.
C6	OTCA Program	4a. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed? (79 % Positive Response)	The goal of the program is to reach the 90% and above positive response rate. The survey form should be modified in Section 2 and 4 to ensure responses are directed at OTCA. In this case the question may relate to the whole process that includes OTCA's work up front and the permitting process of the permitting authority.

D. Pesticides Program General Concerns			Response
DG1	Pesticides Permitting Program	No need to change a thing, the system is perfect.	No response.
DG2	Pesticides Permitting Program	Staff is always polite and answers questions, especially Robin Mooney and Elizabeth Lopes- Duguay. Increase training opportunities to earn credits towards licensing.	No Response.
DG3	Pesticides Permitting Program	Continue to offer re-certification credits at the RINLA Winter Meeting. It is informative and convenient.	DEM administers and requires continued training for re-certification, but does not organize these training sessions. It is up to industry whether private or commercial to organize the training for re-certification credit. As part of the licensing requirements, applicators must obtain re-certification to maintain their license. DEM is willing to assist organizations to develop training, but the responsibility is up to them. Since there are many categories, DEM does not have the resources to organize training for every category. DEM has made it convenient for applicators to receive credit for trainings held in the New England States and will continue to do so.
DG4	Pesticides Permitting Program	A better program is needed to install Integrated Pest Management. Additional help is needed to advise and help farms and growers on spray material. It would be cost effective for all.	DEM does include information on this topic on a generic basis in the URI training basic core training and the specific categories, but not in any great detail.
DG5	Pesticides Permitting Program	There should be more information presented concerning pest control work during pest control training. There was no information presented on becoming a pest control technician.	This is a general comment and would need to be better defined to prepare an appropriate response. DEM is responsible to provide training on the proper use and handling of pesticides, pest identification etc. as a pesticide applicator and will continue to do so as long as resources are available.
E. Waste Management General Comments			Response
EG1	Tank registrations	Keep the language simple. Permit process is sometimes in double talk. You are not flexible for considering exemptions even for the lowest amount of products.	There has been no changes to the language used on tank registration applications for many years, so the program is unaware of what specific language has been found to be confusing. Staff is available to answer questions to assist the public, and the Department is agreeable to revisit the language used in the application if more specific comment is provided. The exemption restrictions are currently required by regulation, with residential home heating oil tanks under 1100 gallons being exempt from registration requirements.
EG2	Tank registrations	Tank fee are due in October for registrations that do not expire for the following June. The paperwork we need isn't received until October or November. This can be a problem since some companies continually asks for the new certificates before they expire. They can refuse to deliver gas if the paperwork is not received.	The Department will evaluate what regulatory and/or statutory changes are required to adjust the effective dates of tank registration periods to better correspond to actual billing cycles/procedures. The Department will also need to assess potential fiscal impacts (if any) that may occur with potential changes, with respect to the Department's fiscal budget, which ends on June 30 <sup>th</sup> of each year.

<b>E. Waste Management General Comments</b>			<b>Response</b>
EG3	Transporter Program	The transporter permit renewal process is cumbersome. (2) Criminal background checks are a waste of time.	The program is aware of this complaint, however, criminal background checks are mandated per RIGL 23-19.1-10. The Department has reviewed and modified its submittal requirements in the past to minimize the burden on the applicant (as much as possible), while still complying with the above statutory requirement.
EG4	Transporter Program	The transporter program should consider a multi-year permit. Renew information does not significantly change on a yearly basis and the administrative work needed to complete the permit is cumbersome.	Proposed legislation has been submitted to the General Assembly to allow company transporter permits to be issued for a 2-year period, to reduce the burden of submittal/paperwork requirements. Based upon solicited feedback from transporters, the vehicles will continue to be permitted on an annual basis. A significant number of transporters raised concerns about doubling the annual fee as the cost of a new 2-year permit, given vehicle maintenance issues, and the frequency of vehicle breakdowns.
EG5	Transporter Program	DEM personnel do not call back from voice messages.	The program does, and will continue to make every effort to return phone calls in a timely manner.
EG6	Transporter Program	Should be able to fill out applications electronically	The Department has requested, and is currently working with the Department of Administration to create a web based vehicle application form for transporter permits.
<b>F. Water Program General Comment</b>			<b>Response</b>
FG1	Water Quality Certifications	The requirements of the rules or the results of reviews are not accurately or clearly expressed, resulting in undue delay and frustration.	In general, there is a lack of policy documents and other program guidance on the information needed to comply with water quality regulations. Work is under development to establish policies on such topics as dredging windows, eel grass mitigation, requirements for silt curtains, and storm water BMPs. These efforts together with more descriptive explanation of deficiencies upon review should help address this concern.
<b>G. Wetlands Program Survey Concerns</b>			<b>Response</b>
G1	Wetlands Program	3c. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete? (71% Positive Response)	Recently, the Program implemented a new process that combines the completeness review with the technical review. This delays the determination of completeness somewhat but improves the overall decision time by ensuring that the reviews are done by the same person, thereby eliminating duplication of effort. Notwithstanding, any major items that may be missing are still flagged early on.
G2	Wetlands Program	2c. How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the information provided to you through the pre-application meeting/discussion? (74% Positive Response)	Unless staff has previously visited a site of a proposed project, certain questions frequently posed at pre-application meetings cannot be answered. The Program urges applicants to submit a wetland edge verification request if more detailed responses are needed from the Program.
G3	Wetlands Program	3e. *How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit? (74% Positive Response)	New rules are being developed that will improve the clarity of submittal requirements and help provide a better understanding of the criteria used in evaluating a proposed project. Hopefully, this may lead to improved submittals that will reduce decision times and improve the applicant's ability to gauge whether his/her proposed project will be approved.
G4	Wetlands Program	3diii. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas? Relevance of Request? (75% Positive Response)	In general, the program asks only for relevant information. The financial condition of the applicant is not directly considered. However, reasonableness of required information is weighed during development of regulations. We are in the process of developing new regulations for dams, beneficial projects, and a new applicability determination process that will likely eliminate some submittal requirements that are determined to be non-essential in certain circumstances.
G5	Wetlands Program	4a. *Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed? (79% Positive Response)	The reasons for the negative responses here are not identified. Managers of the program continually make improvements or changes where resources allow, and admit limitations in the program's ability to respond to all needs.

Wetlands Program General Comments			Response
GG1	Renewal Application	When issuing a permit, the supervisor should consider the individuals situation and work with that persons as to not cause financial hardship with an abundance of irrelevant requests.	In general, the program asks only for relevant information. The financial condition of the applicant is not directly considered. However, reasonableness of required information is weighed during development of regulations. We are in the process of developing new regulations for dams, beneficial projects, and a new applicability determination process that will likely eliminate some submittal requirements that are determined to be non-essential in certain circumstances.
GG2	Verify Edge, Preliminary Determinations , Alter Wetlands Application	Timeliness between reviews was longer than expected. Phone calls were returned and meetings were helpful.	Time delays related to personnel shortages are being addressed by filling vacancies and use of overtime.
GG3	Alter Wetlands permit	Is it DEM practice to have a flood plain study done for a lot? This will cost about \$5,000 and would like to know if such a request is needed.	The wetland rules require that flood plain impacts be addressed; sometimes this results in the need for a study. In other cases, available mapping or other data is available at reasonable cost to address this requirement

## Appendix A – Program Survey Information

No	Program	Application Title	Permits Applied 7/1/03 to 6/30/04 (Estimate)	Number of surveys mailed	Sample size needed for statistical evaluation
<b>Office of Air Resources</b>					
31		Title V Operating Permit Application	16	16	N/A
32		Pre-construction Permit	24	24	N/A
33		Air Toxics Operating Permit	9	9	N/A
		Environmental Consultants	8	8	N/A
<b>Totals – Air Resources</b>			<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Office of Water Resource</b>					
2	<b>Groundwater Program</b>	Registration & Order of Approval for the Underground Injection Control Program	46	46	N/A
3	<b>Design, Construction, Operations &amp; Maintenance</b>				
4		Order of Approval for Operation & Maintenance Plan for Wastewater Treatment Facilities	11	11	N/A
5		License for Wastewater Treatment Facilities Operators	570	150	39
20	<b>RIPDES</b>	All RIPDES Permits	59	59	23
<b>Totals - Water Programs</b>			<b>686</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>38</b>
6	<b>Individual Sewage Disposal System (ISDS)</b>	Redesign	236	152	38
7		Transfer	189	5	N/A
8		ISDS - Residential New Construction	1029	156	39
10		ISDS Residential Repairs & Alterations	1576	156	39
11		Request for Variance(s)	214	152	38
12		Soil/Water table Suitability Test	1435	156	39
13		Residential Site Suitability Determinations	229	136	38
<b>Totals - ISDS</b>			<b>4908</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>39</b>
14	<b>Wetlands</b>	Request for Preliminary Determination Application	415	107	38
15		Application To Alter Freshwater Wetlands	50	50	23
16		Request to Verify Delineated Edge/Presence of Wetlands	49	49	N/A
17		Renewal Application	31	31	N/A
18		Permit Transfer Application	39	39	N/A
19		Permit Modification Application	30	30	N/A
<b>Totals - Wetlands</b>			<b>614</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Totals – Office of Water Resources</b>			<b>6208</b>	<b>1485</b>	

No	Program	Application Title	Permits Applied 7/1/03 to 6/30/04 (Estimate)	Number of surveys to be mailed	Sample size needed for a statistical evaluation
<b>Office of Waste Management</b>					
34	Transporters	Septage Waste Transporter	60	60	N/A
36		Hazardous Waste Transporter	86	86	N/A
38		Medical Waste Transporter Permit	10	10	N/A
<i>Totals –Waste Transporters</i>			156	156	34
	<b>Other Waste Programs</b>				
	Clean-up Approvals				
40	Site Remediation	Orders of Approval	36	36	N/A
41	LUST	Corrective Action Plans	75	75	N/A
42	UST	Tank Registrations	583	140	39
	Solid Waste Management Facilities		2	2	N/A
43		Transfer Stations	32	32	N/A
44		Compost Facilities	15	15	N/A
<i>Totals – Other Hazardous Waste Programs</i>			743	300	
<b>Totals –Waste Management Programs</b>			<b>899</b>	<b>456</b>	39
	<b>Agriculture</b>				
45	<b>Pesticides</b>	Private Applicators	272	36	
46		Licensed Commercial Applicator	605	78	
47		Certified Commercial Applicators	353	45	
48		Licensed Dealers	39	5	
<b>Agriculture Totals</b>			<b>1269</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>39</b>
	<b>OTCA</b>				
48	<b>OTCA</b>	Dredging	32	32	N/A
		Water Quality	7	7	N/A
49		ISDS	2	2	N/A
50		Wetlands	54	54	N/A
51		Site Remediation	5	5	N/A
<b>OTCA Totals</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Total Survey Requirements</b>			<b>8533</b>	<b>2262</b>	

## Appendix B - Survey Sample Size Determination\*

The chart below will determine the survey sample size used in the 2003 DEM Permitting Customer Satisfaction Survey. According to EPA the below chart can be used in developing a simple Customer Survey and is based on the fact that we are servicing a small customer base and decisions that will be made as a result of the survey will not be far-reaching or long-lasting. The primary purpose of the survey is to determine the overall trend in customer satisfaction. The results of the survey will allow DEM to make process improvements when problems are identified.

Number in Target Group	Sampling Error	Confidence Level	Sample Size
1000	±10	80	39
500	±10	80	38
200	±10	80	34
100	±10	80	29
50	±10	80	23

The target group will be the permit applicants who have applied for permits / certifications / submissions in the July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003 time period. The sampling error is the true value of a given response if we are to apply the result of a question to the population as a whole. In the case of our survey, if 85% respond to a question in a particular manner, the size of our survey would indicate a true response to vary between 75 and 95%.

This assumes that the people who responded to the survey truly represent the overall population. This may not be true. The characteristics of the customers in the sample may occasionally be very different from the characteristics of the customers not in the sample. In these circumstances, the true value for all customers will be very different from the value obtained from the customers surveyed. The only way to get around this statistical fact is to specify “how certain we want to be” that the true value does, in fact, fall within a specific range. This degree of certainty is known as the confidence level.

The above chart will not be able to statistically interpret small sample sizes. Therefore in instances where the numbers of permits that are submitted are less than 50, all applicants will be surveyed.

\*Information in this appendix has been taken from an EPA guidance document entitled “Customer Service in Permitting”.

**Appendix C –Generic Survey Instrument**  
**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management**  
**Applicant Permitting Survey**

**Introduction:**

The attached survey is a follow-up to your recent environmental permit application with the RI DEM. We are interested in improving our permitting system, and to do so, we need your honest input. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and can be done anonymously, but we encourage you to take a few moments to help us improve the quality of our permitting processes.

**Instructions:**

Please complete this survey by placing a mark in the box that describes your experience with the DEM permitting program. Most of the questions in this survey ask that you rate some aspect of DEM's performance by indicating whether the service exceeded expectations, met expectations, or did not meet expectations. If a question does not apply to your interaction with DEM, please check it and go on to the next question.

This survey is estimated to take about 10 minutes to complete.

**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Applicant Permitting Survey**

**1) Permit Type Identification:** Please identify the type of program your response to this survey applies, and identify the specific permit type by placing a mark in the box to the right of the permit type. You may mark more than one, as appropriate, or, if your responses will differ substantially for different program areas, please copy this form and submit one for each program area.

- |    |       |                          |
|----|-------|--------------------------|
| a) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**2) Pre-application meeting/discussion:** These questions cover the pre-application discussion or meeting (i.e., a phone call or meeting) with DEM to discuss the application process before you submitted the application.

**a. How satisfied are you with the availability of DEM staff in responding to your pre-application questions?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**b. How satisfied are you with the assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting/discussion?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**c. How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the information provided to you through the pre-application meeting/discussion?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**d. How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden (e.g., using pollution prevention opportunities to reduce emissions, or identifying future needs now to minimize the need for modifications later)?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**3) Permit Application Review and Determination:** These questions cover the time period from the submission of your permit application to DEM's decision to either issue or deny the permit.

**a. How satisfied are you with the clarity of the permit application forms?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**b. How satisfied are you with the clarity of the accompanying instructions or guidance?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**c. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**d. If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas?**

**i. Clarity of Request?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**ii. Timeliness of DEM's request?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**iii. Relevance of Request?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**e. How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**f. How satisfied are you with the clarity of the final permit decision?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**4) Overall satisfaction:** These questions cover your overall level of satisfaction with the handling of the permit process by DEM.

**a. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**b. Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff treated you in a courteous manner?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**c. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**d. Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff responded to your needs for guidance, information, or technical support under the permit process?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

**e. Overall, how satisfied are you with the role of the permitting process in protecting the environment?**

Exceeded expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Met expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Did not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	--	---

5) This survey is being filled out by: \_\_Consultant \_\_ non-Consultant \_\_ Governmental Unit

6) Should DEM allow applications to be filed electronically? \_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

7) If DEM allowed applications to be filed electronically, would you file your application in this manner?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

8) Would you be willing to work with DEM in the event a stakeholder group is started to improve the permit process? (If yes, please complete question 9.) \_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, please complete question 9. (If no, completion of question 9 is optional. Your responses will be used by DEM for informational purpose only.)

9) Please provide the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

10) Please provide any other comments you would like us to consider:

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

When complete; please return the survey to:

Sandra Lopes  
Department of Environmental Management  
DEM Ombudsman  
235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Ms. Lopes at 222-4700 extension 2418 or Sandra.lopes@dem.ri.gov

## Appendix D – Collapsed Survey Results

Appendix D Collapsed Survey Data															
Question No.	Question	Air		ISDS		OTCA		Pesticide		Waste		Water		Wetlands	
1	Number of Responses	19		136		24		32		71		16		30	
		+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
2a Pre-Application Meetings	How satisfied are you with the availability of DEM staff in responding to your pre-application questions?	94	6	92	8	87	13	100	0	93	7	100	0	96	4
2b	How satisfied are you with the assistance provided by DEM staff during the pre-application meeting /discussion?	94	6	90	10	87	13	100	0	98	2	100	0	93	7
2c	How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the information provided to you through the pre-application meeting/discussion?	94	6	88	12	77	23	100	0	98	2	100	0	74	26
2d	How satisfied are you that the DEM staff provided suggestions or information to help minimize the overall permitting burden)?	94	6	77	23	70	30	100	0	98	2	90	10	88	12
<b>Category Average</b>		<b>94</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>12</b>
3a Permit Application Review	How satisfied are you with the clarity of the permit application forms?	89	11	88	12	88	12	100	0	90	10	82	18	86	14
3b	How satisfied are you with the clarity of the accompanying instructions or guidance?	89	11	89	11	88	12	100	0	91	9	82	18	82	18
3c	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in notifying you that your application was complete?	76	24	75	25	58	42	100	0	90	10	91	9	71	29
3d	If you received any requests for supplemental information by DEM, how satisfied are you in the following areas?														
i.	Clarity of request?	90	10	91	9	100	0	100	0	98	2	83	17	88	12
ii.	Timeliness of request?	85	15	74	26	63	37	100	0	86	14	83	17	83	17
iii.	Relevance of request?	85	15	72	28	63	37	100	0	97	3	83	17	75	25
3e	How satisfied are you with DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of your permit?	82	18	67	33	71	29	100	0	97	3	91	9	74	26
3f	How satisfied are you with the clarity of the final permit decision?	93	7	85	18	100	0	100	0	100	0	91	9	100	0
<b>Category Average</b>		<b>86</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>18</b>

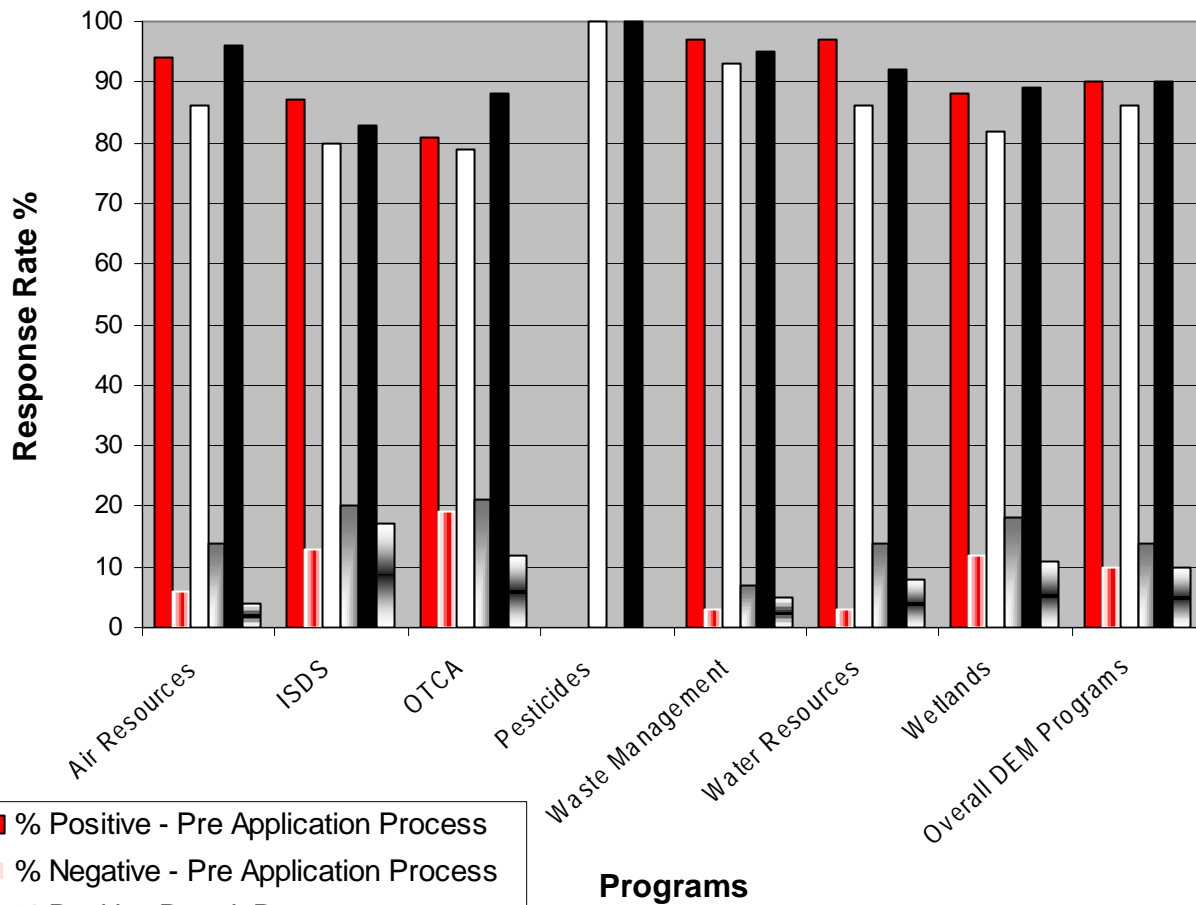
Question No.	Question	Air		ISDS		OTCA		Pesticide		Waste		Water		Wetlands	
4a Overall Satisfaction	Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the permitting process was managed?	94	6	76	24	79	21	100	0	96	4	92	8	79	21
4b	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff treated you in a courteous manner?	100	0	97	3	100	0	100	0	100	0	92	8	97	3
4c	Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality and timeliness of the communications you have received from the DEM?	94	6	77	23	80	20	100	0	93	7	93	7	92	8
4d	Overall, how satisfied are you that the DEM permitting staff responded to your needs for guidance, information, or technical support under the permit process?	100	0	80	20	80	20	100	0	96	4	93	8	96	4
4e	Overall, how satisfied are you with the role of the permitting process in protecting the environment?	94	6	88	12	100	0	100	0	96	4	93	7	81	19
<b>Category Average</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>11</b>

Question No.	Question	Air		ISDS		OTCA		Pesticide		Waste		Water		Wetlands	
		Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
6	DEM should allow applicants to file electronically?	95	5	81	19	78	22	76	24	81	19	92	8	86	14
7	I would file electronically.	89	11	76	24	63	37	77	23	70	30	67	33	74	26

## Appendix E DEM Customer Satisfaction Results by Program

Appendix E

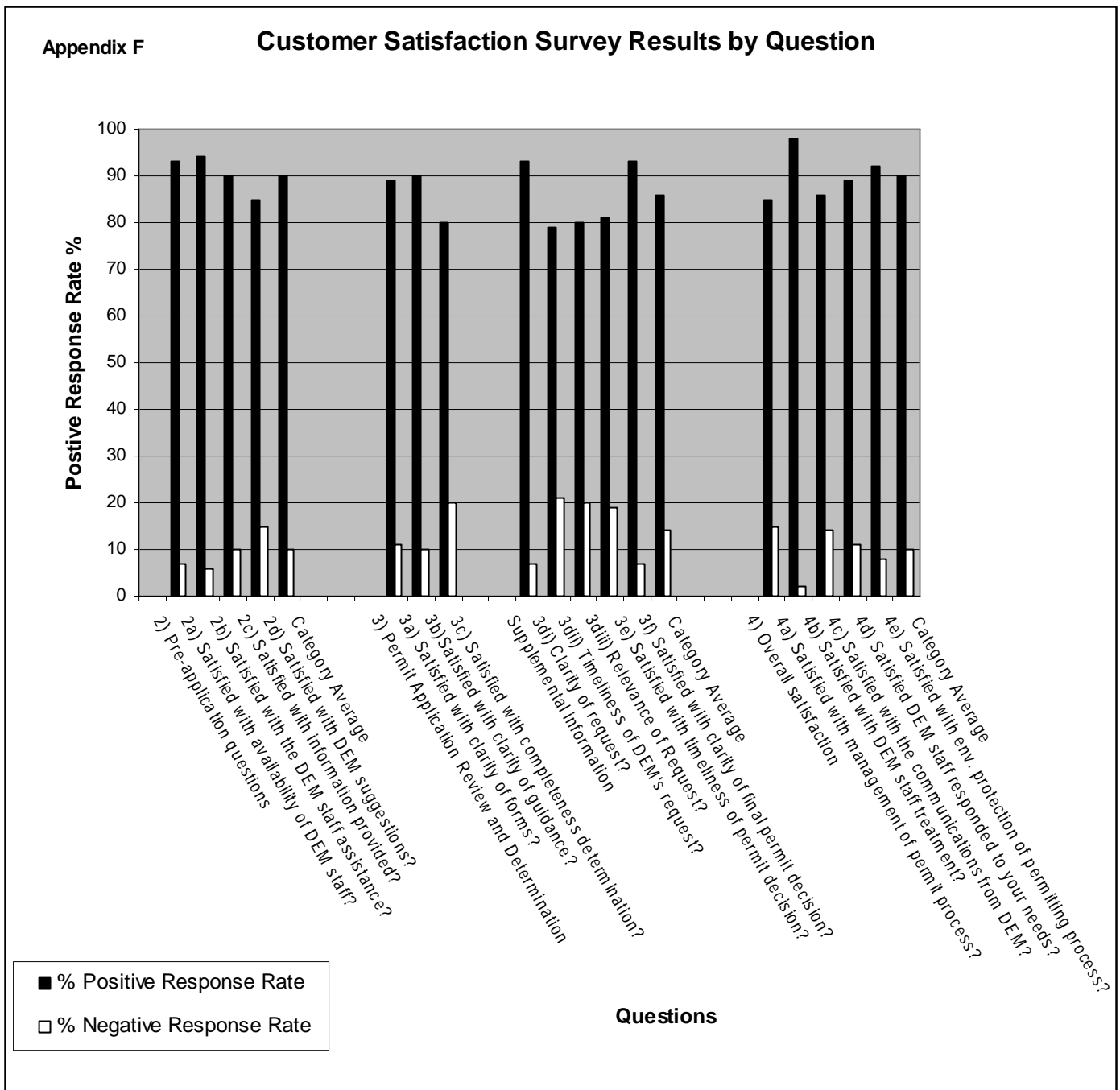
### 2004 Customer Satisfaction Survey Summary by Program



- % Positive - Pre Application Process
- ▤ % Negative - Pre Application Process
- % Positive Permit Process
- ▒ % Negative Permit Process
- % Positive - Overall Process
- ▤ % Negative - Overall Process

**Programs**

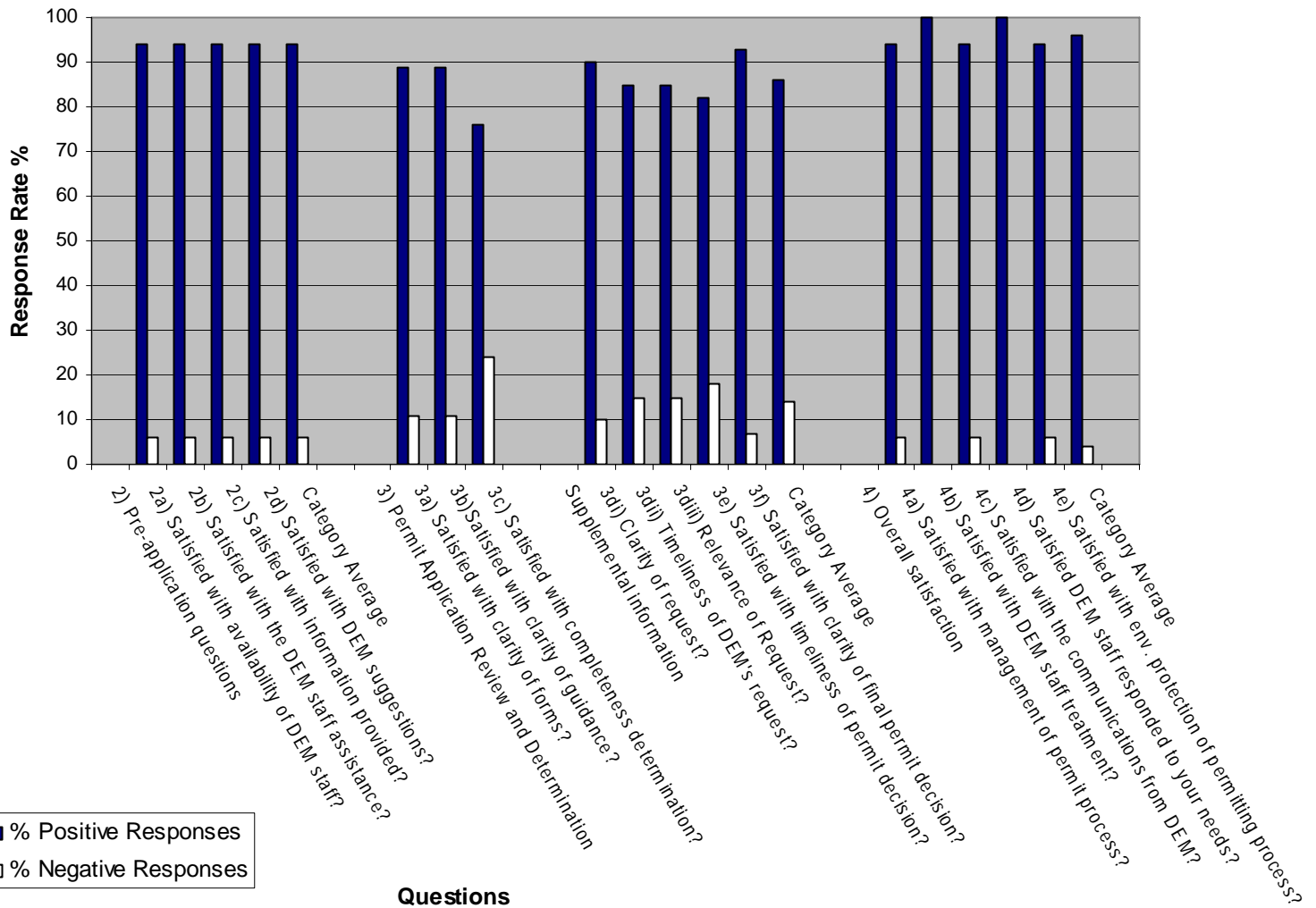
## Appendix F Customer Satisfaction Survey Results by Program/Question



## Appendix F-1 Air Permitting Program Customer Survey Results

Appendix F-1

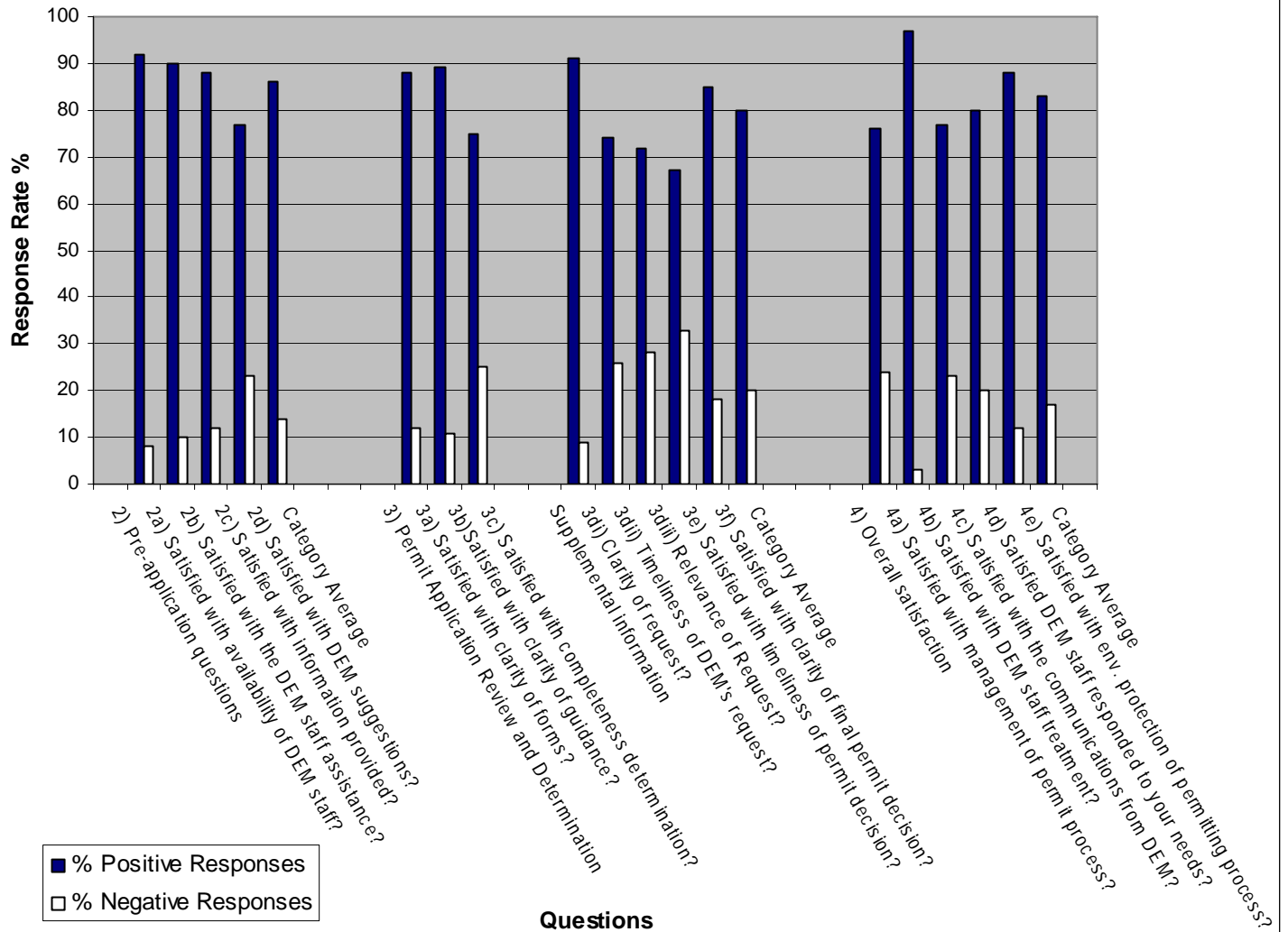
### Air Resources Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



## Appendix F-2 ISDS Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

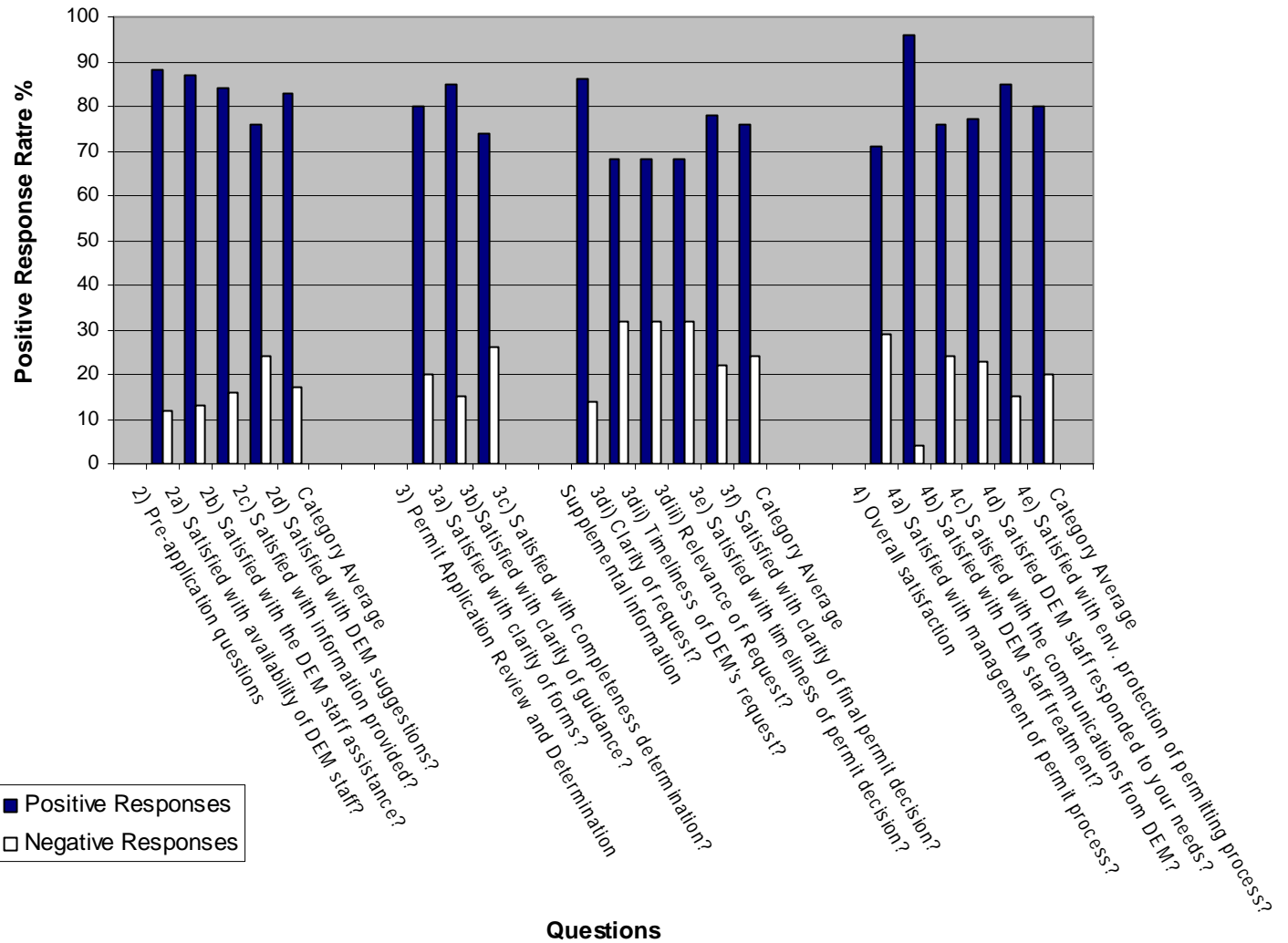
Appendix F-2

### ISDS Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



Appendix F-2a

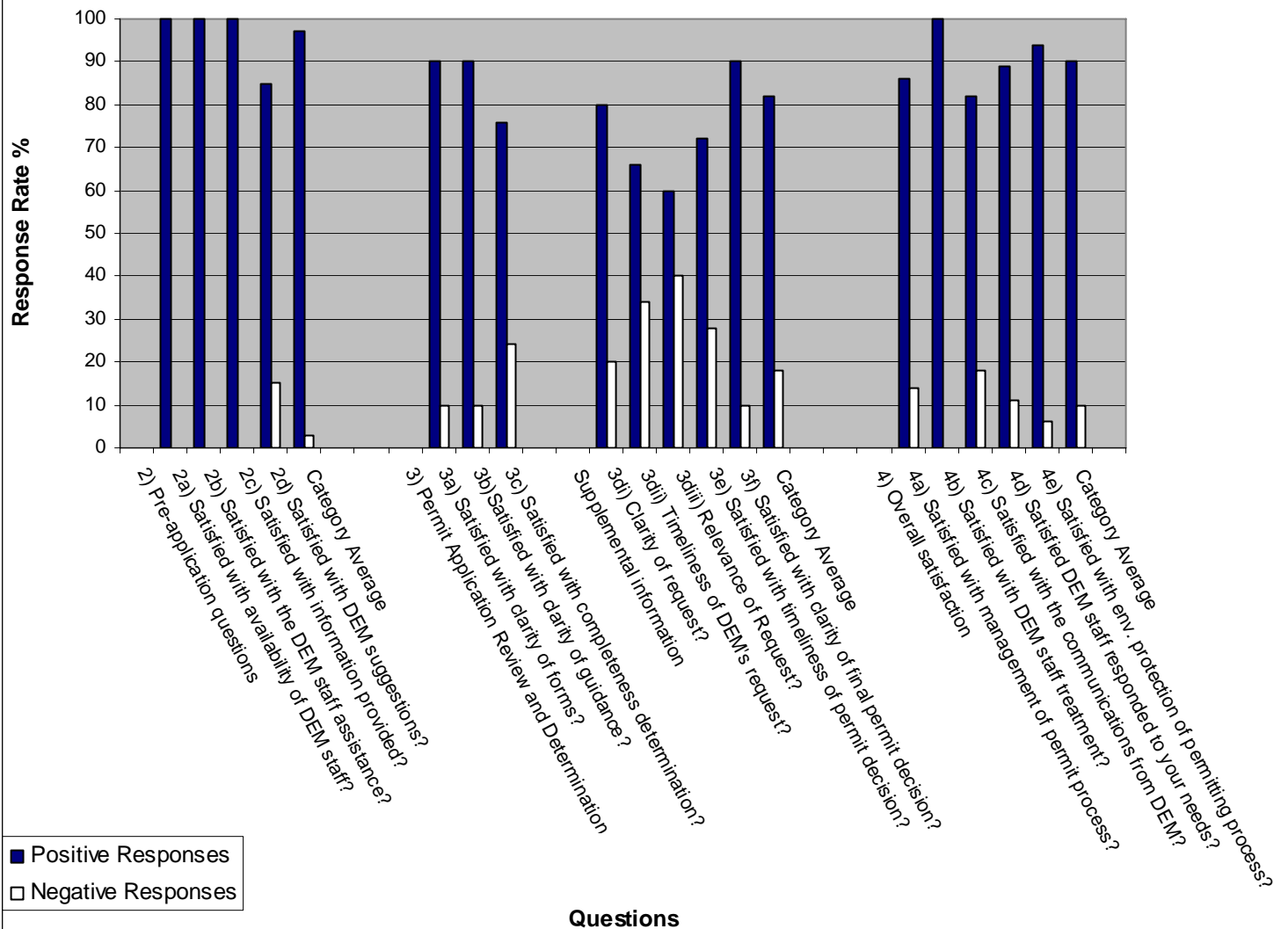
## ISDS Residential New Construction - Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



## Appendix F-2b ISDS Residential SSD Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Appendix F-2c

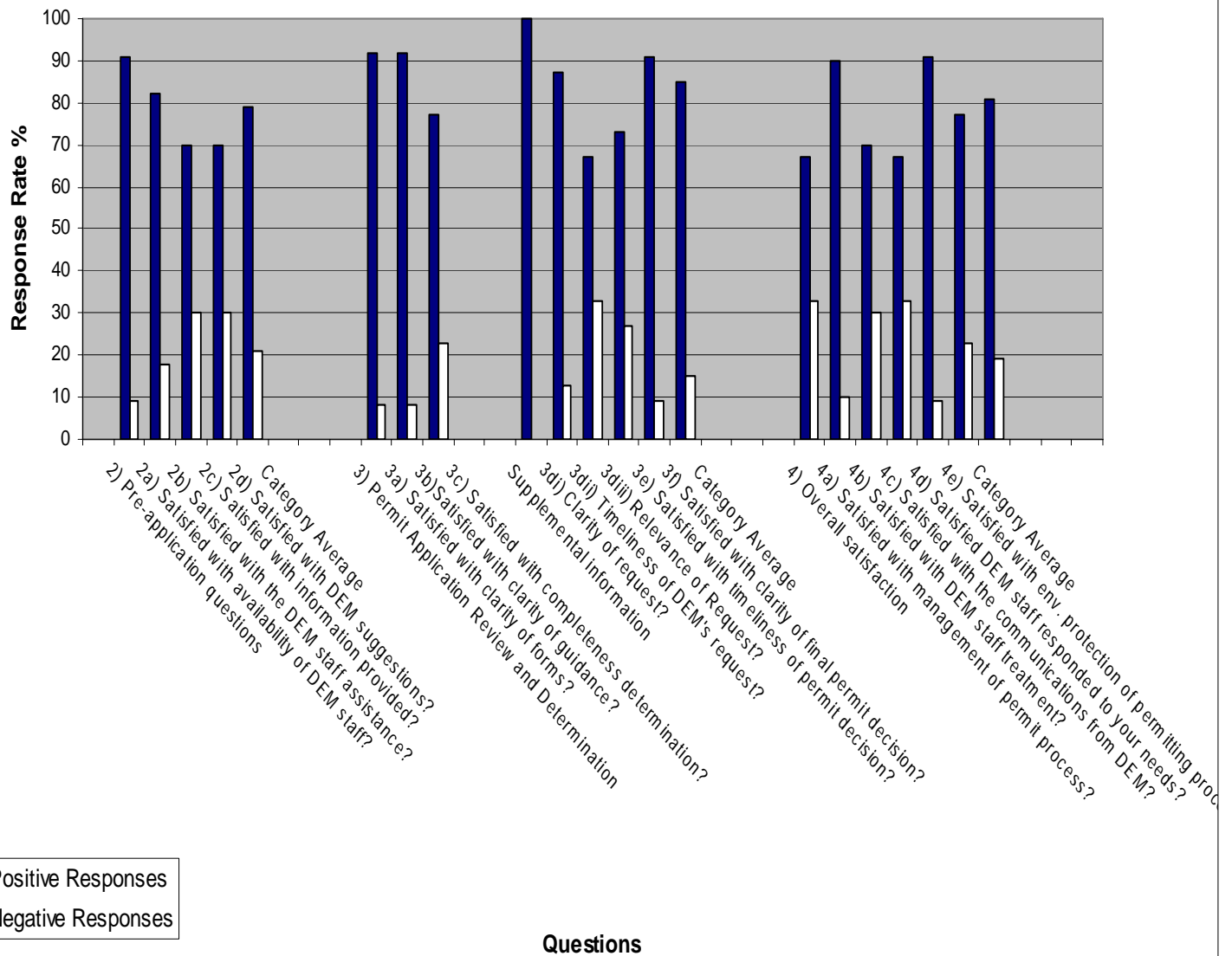
### ISDS Residential SSD Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



## Appendix F-2c - ISDS Residential Repairs & Alterations Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Appendix F-2c

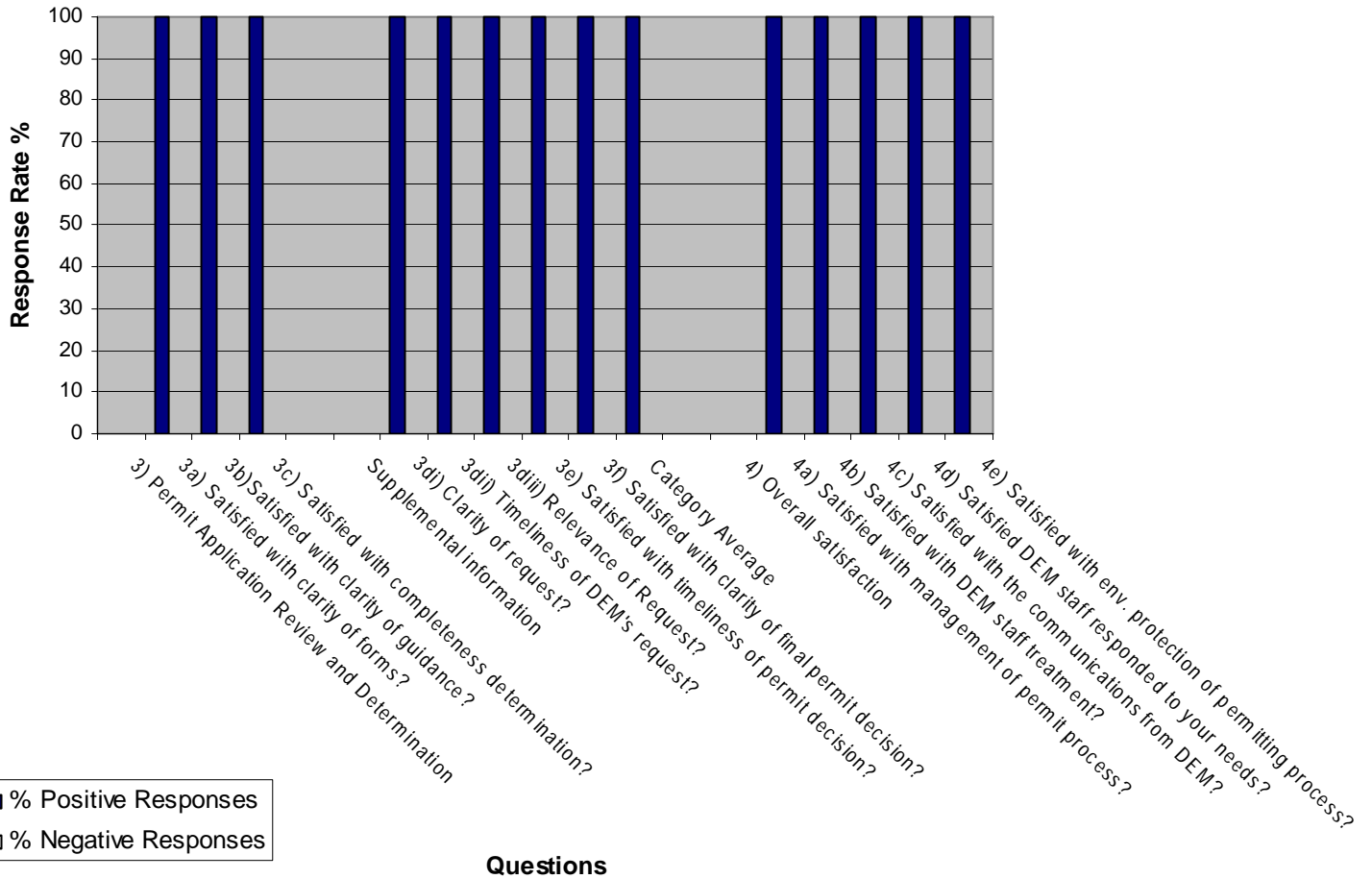
### ISDS Residential Repair & Alterations Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



## Appendix F-3 Pesticides Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Appendix F-3

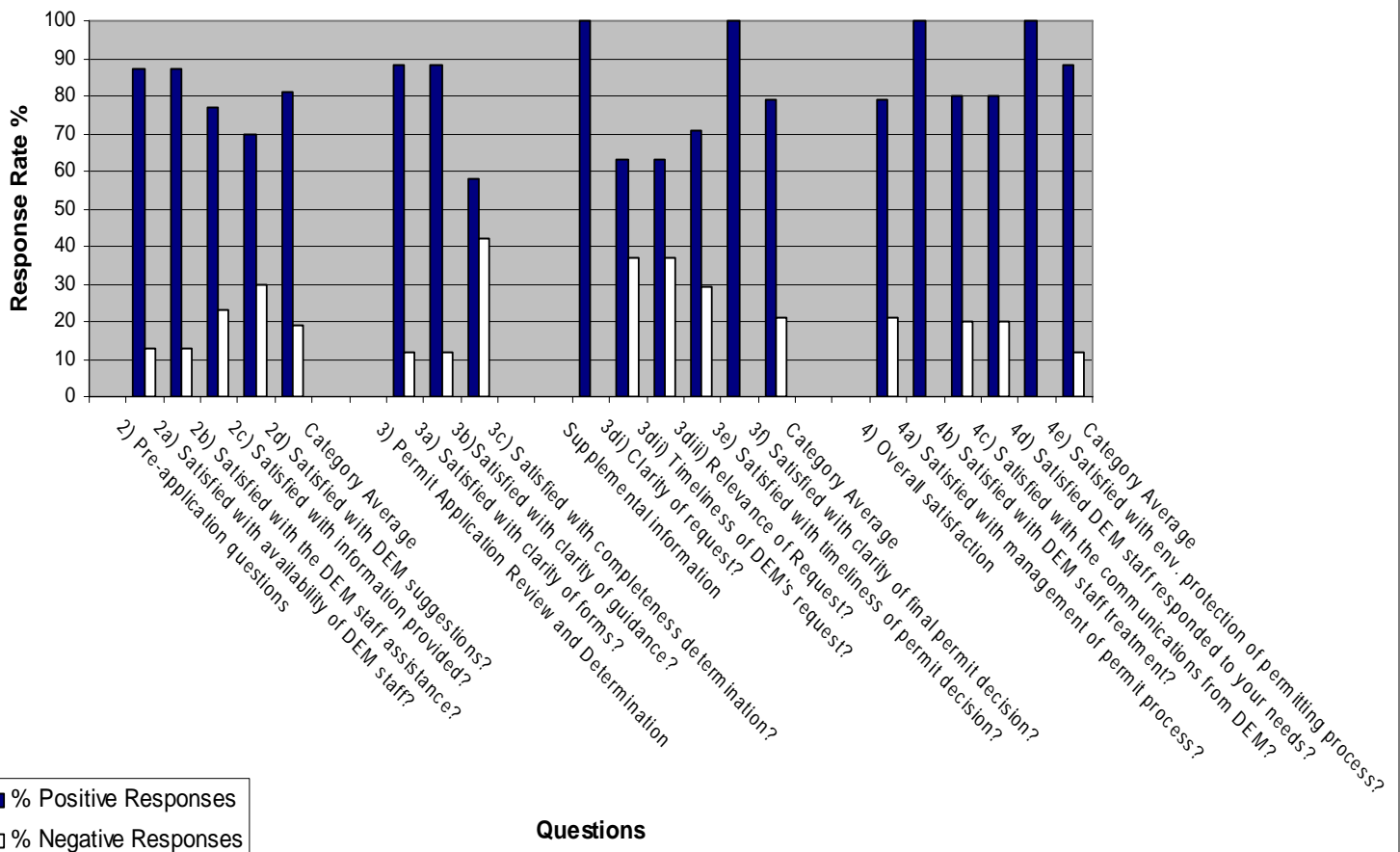
### Pesticides Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



## Appendix F-4 Office of Technical and Customer Assistance Survey Results

Appendix F- 4

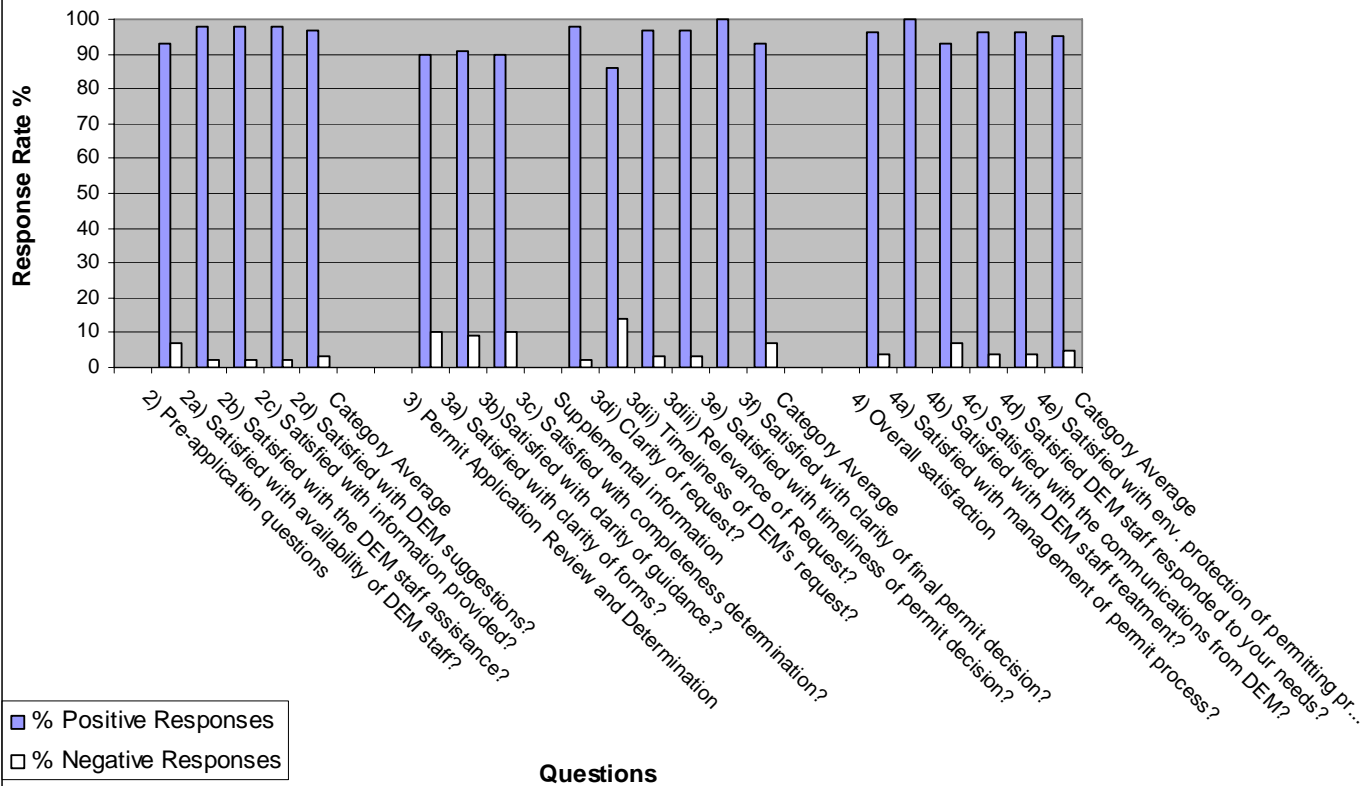
### Office of Technical & Customer Assistance Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



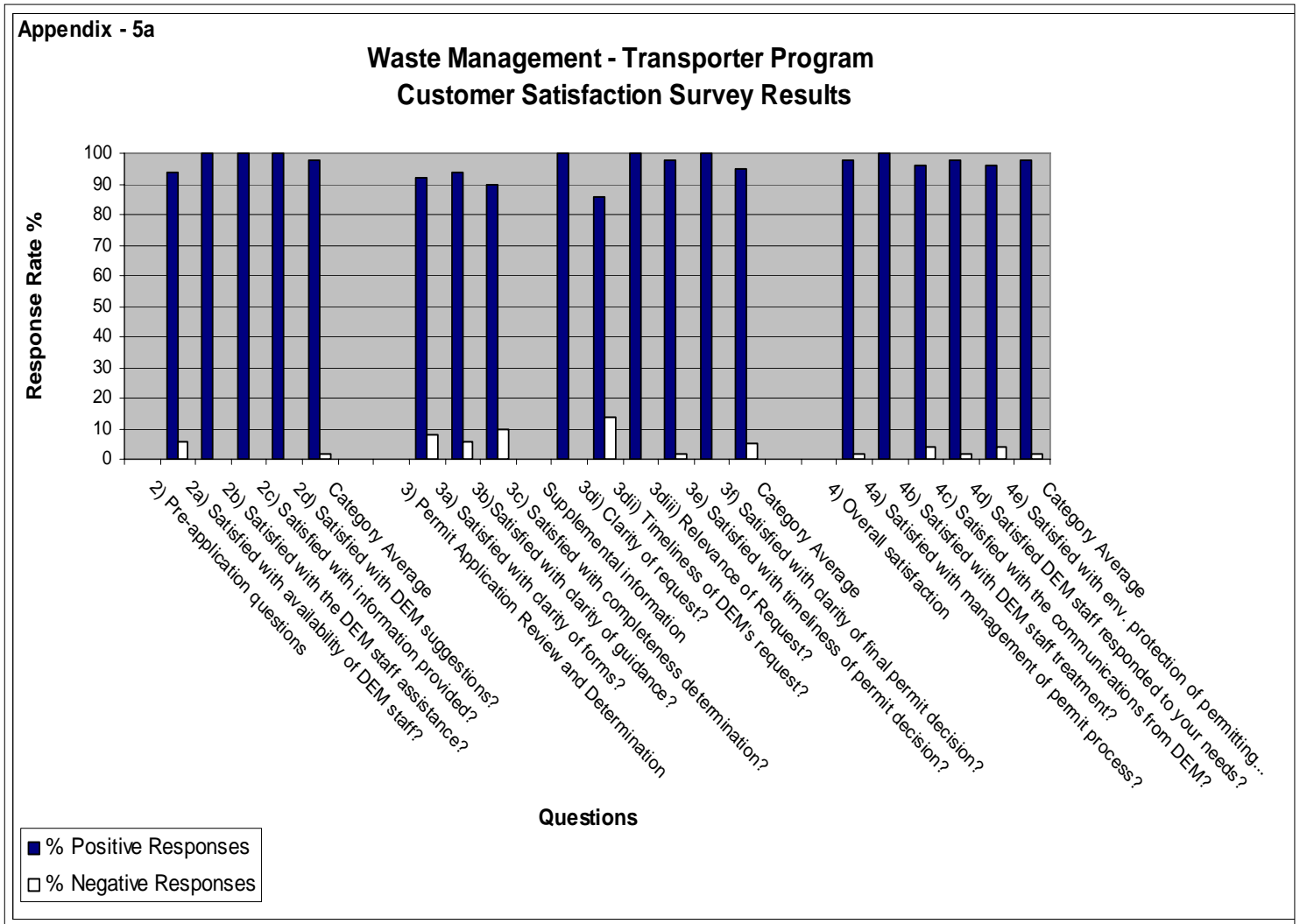
## Appendix F-5 Waste Management Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Appendix F-5

### Office of Waste Management Customer Survey Results



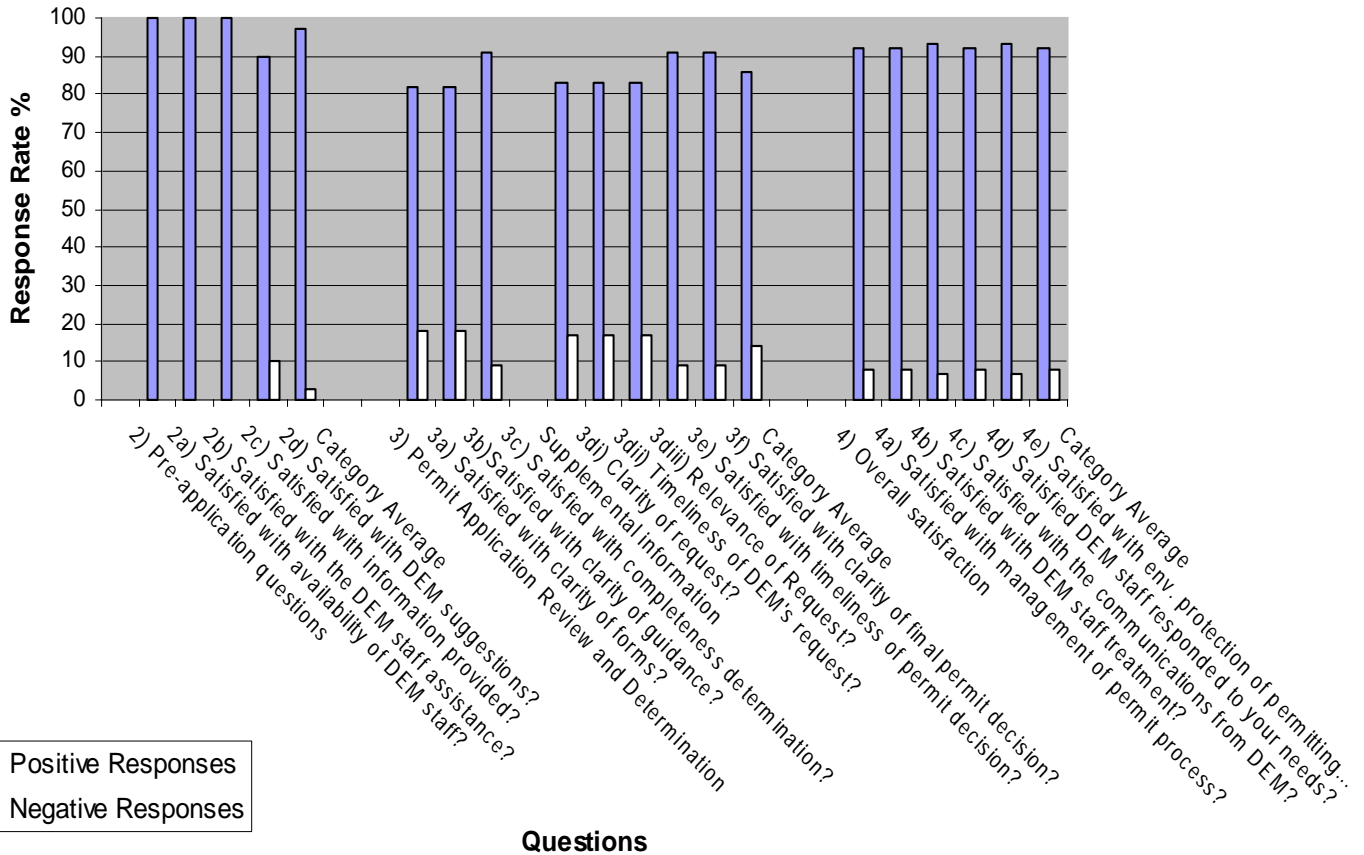
## Appendix F-5a - Waste Management – Transporter Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



## Appendix F-6 Water Resources Customer Survey Results

Appendix F-6

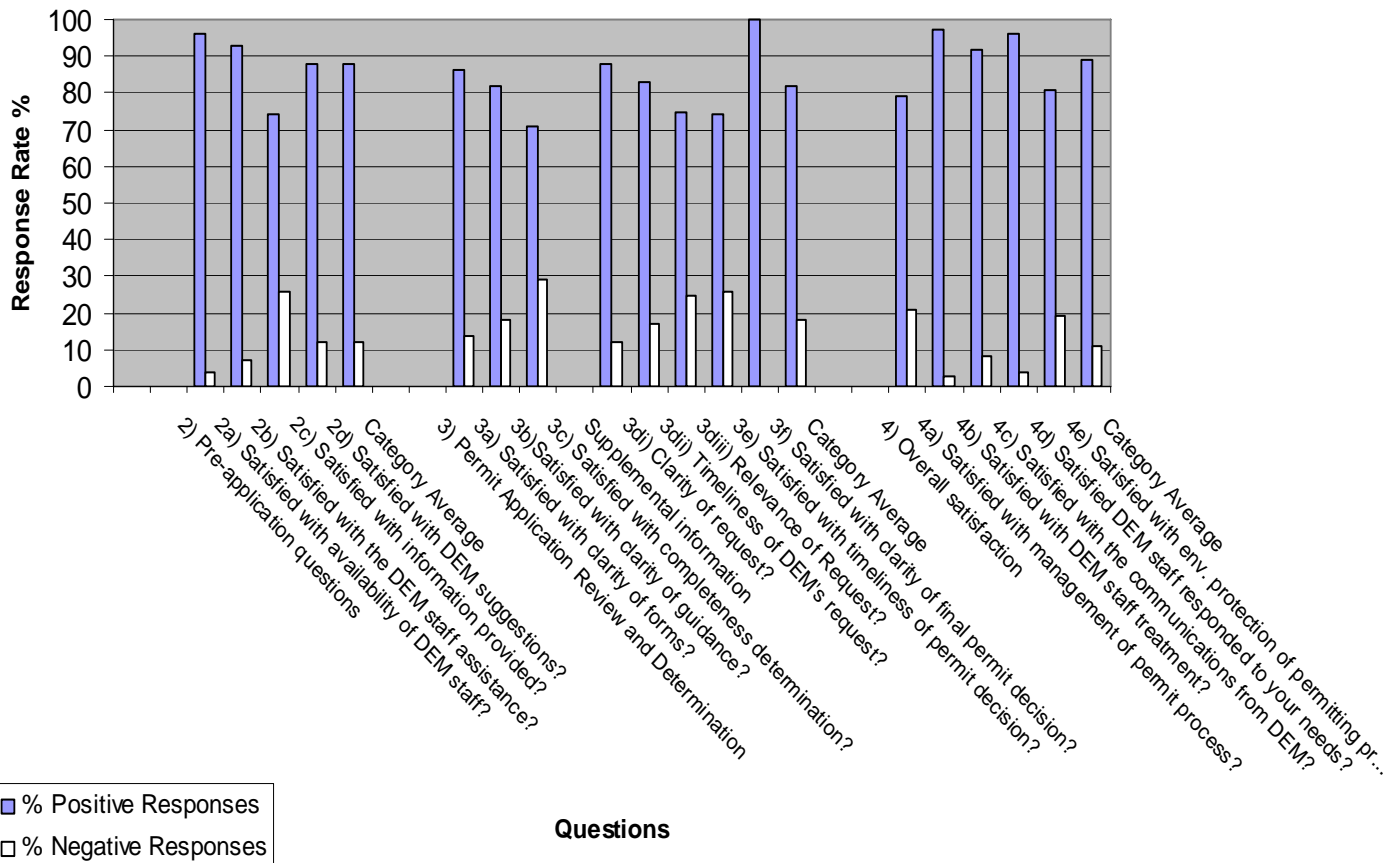
### Office of Water Resources Customer Survey Results



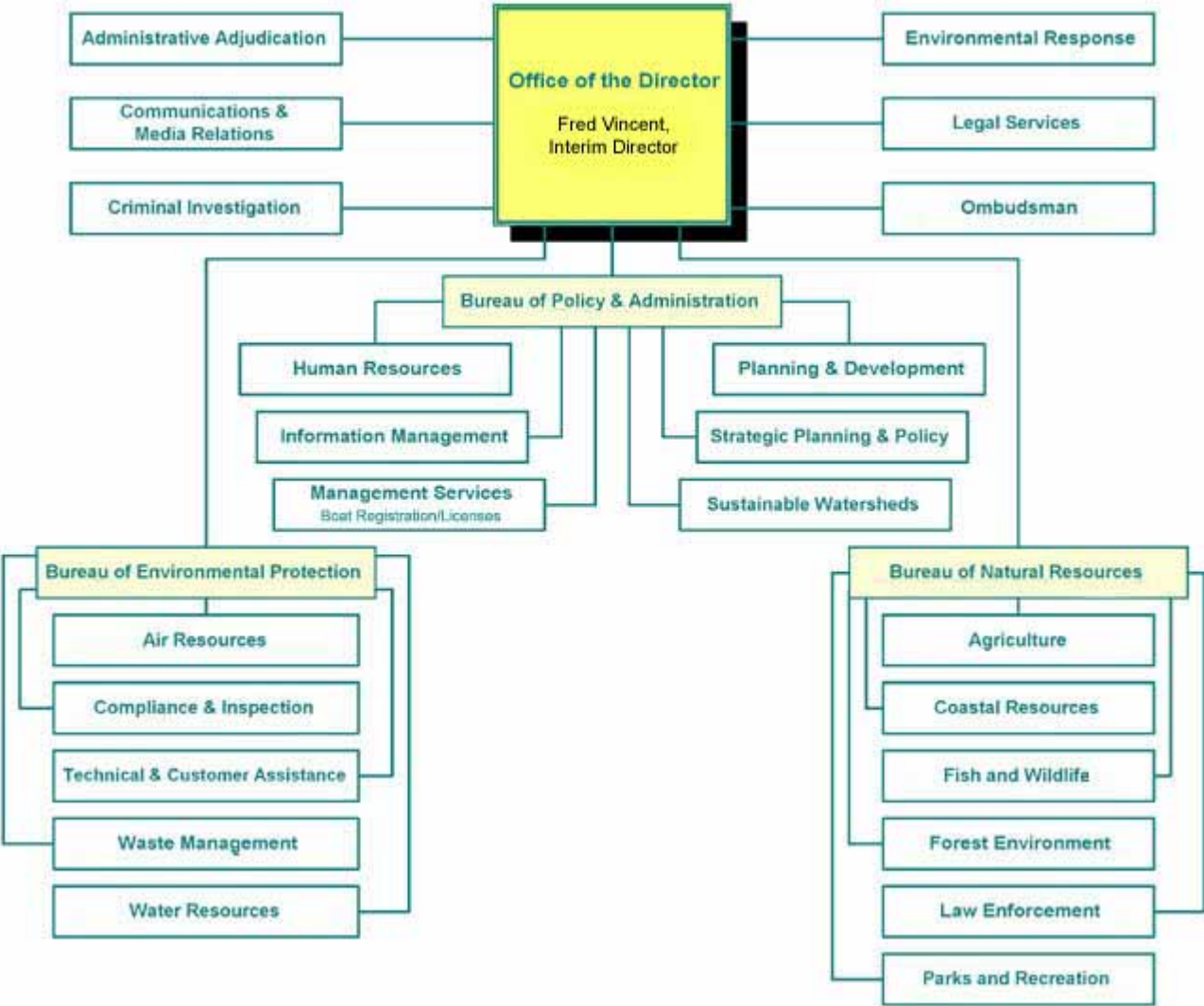
## Appendix F-7 Wetlands Permitting Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Appendix F- 7

### Wetlands Permitting Program Customer Survey Results



Appendix G DEM Organization Chart



## Appendix H

## Survey Comment Tracking Form

No.	Program	Comment	Assigned to	Project Report Date	Project Status
	<b>ISDS</b>				
1	ISDS Program as a whole	Five of the questions received positive response rates lower than 80% in the 2004 survey. The program should review its current processes and develop a plan, where applicable, to raise the positive response rate to greater than 80%. This plan should be submitted to the Director by April 15, 2005 and incorporated in the next work plan. (See page 24 for specific questions)	R. Chateauneuf	June 30, 2005	
2	ISDS Program as a whole	Two questions relate to the timeliness of program actions. The program should determine by April 15, 2005, if there are any process streamlining activities or any methods that could be incorporated to improve timeliness issues. This plan should be submitted to the Director by April 15, 2005 and incorporated in the next work plan. (See page 24 for specific questions)	R. Chateauneuf	June 30, 2005	
3	ISDS Residential New Construction Permitting Program	This program had a response rate that constituted a statistically valid sample. The survey indicated that this permitting program was not achieving the DEM goal of 80% in two categories, i.e., Pre-application Meetings and Overall Satisfaction. Program management should review the processes where applications are reviewed in this category and determine ways to improve customer satisfaction. The program should prepare a report of their findings to the director by April 15, 2005 and incorporate any changes needed to improve customer satisfaction in the 2006 work plan.	R. Chateauneuf	June 30, 2005	
	<b>Waste Management</b>				
1	Tank registrations	The Department will evaluate what regulatory and/or statutory changes are required to adjust the effective dates of tank registration periods to better correspond to actual billing cycles/procedures. The Department will also need to assess potential fiscal impacts (if any) that may occur with potential changes, with respect to the Department's fiscal budget, which ends on June 30 <sup>th</sup> of each year.	L. Hellested	June 30, 2005	
	<b>Wetlands</b>				
1	Wetlands Program	There were three survey questions that fell below the DEM Positive Response goal of 80%. The program should review its procedures to look for areas of improvements and should prepare a response by April 15, 2005. These areas include the following:  3c. The timeliness in notifying permittees that their application was complete. 2c. The usefulness of the information provided to the permittees through the pre-application meeting/discussion. 3diii. The relevance of requests for supplemental information by DEM.	R. Chateauneuf	June 30, 2005	
2	Wetlands Program	Two questions received positive response rates less than the DEM goal of 80% positive response rating in the last two surveys. The program should report back to the Director by April 15, 2005 on ways to improve on these areas: 3e. DEM's timeliness in determining the issuance or denial of permits. 4a. The way the permitting process was managed.	R. Chateauneuf	June 30, 2005	
	<b>IMU</b>			June 30, 2005	
1	Air Program	The IMU should investigate the possibility of facilitating the use of electronic application submissions in the Air Program and report back to the Director by May 30, 2005 on this investigation.	W. Angell	June 30, 2005	